

DID THE ARABIAN ORYX OCCUR IN IRAN?

BY

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His colour is even as that of milk in spring, only the cheeks about his face being black. (...) Sharp rise aloft the piercing points of his horns, black of hue, which are mightier than whetted bronze or chilly iron or jagged rock.

(Oppian, Cynegetica II, 445).

Abstract: The Arabian Oryx is traditionally considered to have occurred in the Arabian Peninsula, Jordan, Syria and Iraq. No data suggest its presence east of the Euphrates and yet the species is occasionally found in the art of south-western and south-eastern Iran. The examples discussed come from glyptic material from Susa and from the chlorite vessels of the Jiroft region. These representations could be the indicator of small relict populations of Oryx trapped on the Iranian side of the Persian Gulf by the rise of sea levels in the early Holocene.

Keywords: Arabian Oryx, *Oryx leucoryx*, glyptic, Persian Gulf, Iran.

The extinction in the wild of the Arabian Oryx, *Oryx leucoryx*, then its subsequent reintroduction, has attracted public and scholarly attention to the species. Its range is traditionally considered to be limited to the Arabian Peninsula and the Mesopotamian semi-desert steppes of Jordan, Syria and Iraq, east to the Euphrates, regions where it persisted until the 19th century.

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No zoological or archaeozoological data indicate the presence of the Arabian Oryx east of the Euphrates. The species is found now and again, however infrequently, in the art of the ancient Near East, and an examination of these representations can bring additional information on its historic distribution. This is the case for Iran, where images of the Arabian Oryx are found in the glyptic of Susa and on the chlorite vases of Jiroft, beyond the generally accepted limits of the range. The object of this note is to discuss these extralimital occurrences.

In former times, large herds of this beautiful and emblematic animal roamed the vast desert areas in search of sparse pasture. Today, the species has disappeared in the wild and only subsists thanks to a captive breeding stock that was maintained in zoos across the world. After its extinction in 1972, large-scale efforts were made to reintroduce the Oryx, and programmes were set up in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Israel, Jordan and Syria in order to progressively reinstall it throughout its old distribution range (Pl. 1-2). The re-established wild populations have developed successfully, so that as of 2011, the species was retrograded from “Endangered” to “Vulnerable” status on the IUCN Red List. Its situation remains however extremely precarious due to continued illegal hunting and habitat reduction throughout its range.

The Arabian Oryx is a medium-sized antelope, the second largest antelope in the region, after the Bubal, now extinct, and the only Hippotraginae in Asia. It is a species highly adapted to the harshest, most arid environments of the deserts and semi-deserts of the Middle East. Its distinctive morphological traits, so different from the other horned animals of the area, usually make it possible to identify the Oryx, with a reasonable degree of certainty, in ancient art: a massive, stocky, almost bovid-like body, a long tail ending in a dark tuft of hair, long ridged horns, straight or slightly curved, either upright or slanted slightly backwards, measuring half to two thirds of the length of the body. Little is known of the behaviour and ecology of the species prior to its extinction in the wild. Most of the information available stems from the reintroduction programmes and the subsequent observation of the re-established populations (Wacher 1988: 102-103). The Arabian Oryx favoured habitats consist of various arid semi-desert and desert formations, such as stony plains, regs or hamadas, hard sands, sand dunes, wadis and arid steppes but the species can also use areas with thicker brush and even rocky hillsides. The main food source is provided by a variety of grasses, such as *Stipagrostis*, tubers,

forbs, dwarf shrubs and ephemerals, shifting to scrubs such as *Sidlitia*, *Capparis*, *Tamaris* and *Citrullus* when the grasses become unavailable (Abu Jafar & Hays-Shahin 1988: 38; Groves 2011).

As a nomadic species, herds occupy an extensive home range, moving between preferred grazing areas². Their movements are largely based on the occurrence of rain, which they can detect at vast distances; Oryx herds have been known to travel hundreds of kilometres in order to follow rainfall, and although preferring the open savannahs on the desert fringes, they will penetrate deep into the sands to exploit the ephemeral vegetation growth following a rainfall (Seddon & Ismail 2002; Groves 2011). Exploration and range extension can occur to a significant extent after rain, the animals moving into an area of recent rainfall once the wind direction has allowed them to detect it. And although they can withstand periods of drought up to 4 or 6 months, a single individual is known to have travelled 90 km in one night to find water. Individuals increase their range throughout their life span (Stanley Price 1988: 23-25).

Distribution of *Oryx leucoryx*

The Oryx occurs nowadays only in a fragment of its previous distribution range, confined to small protected areas in the Arabian Peninsula and in the Levant where it has been reintroduced since the 1980's. Prior to its extinction in the wild in 1972, the species probably occurred throughout most of the aridlands of the Near East. The limits of its former range are not well known, especially to the North and East. The core range of the Oryx seems to have centred on the Nefud and the Rub'al-Khali deserts in Saudi Arabia, extending north into Jordan, the Syrian Desert and Iraq (Syro-Mesopotamian Desert), where the last animal was shot in 1914. The British Museum specimens, collected from the Mesopotamian desert and the head of the Persian Gulf in the 19th and early 20th century, are probably the only known specimens from Iraq (Harrison 1968: 346). The situation in Syria is less clear. There were reports of sightings in the northern part of the Syrian Desert, including the Belka and Hauran, in the late 19th century, and a sighting near Jerud after the First World War. There is no evidence of the species' occurrence east of the Euphrates (Stewart 1963: 112-

² After reintroduction in Oman, a herd established a 3000 km² home range within a few years (Stanley Price 1988).

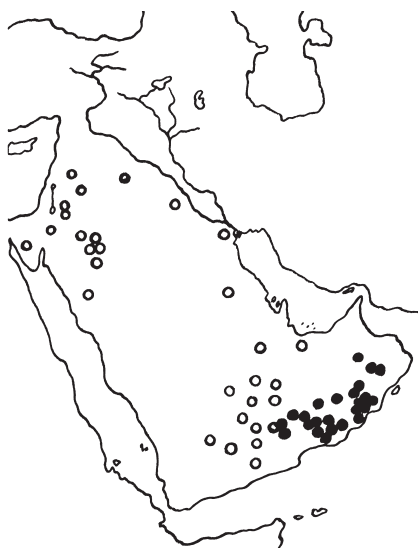


Fig. 1. Historic distribution of *Oryx leucoryx*, based on 19th and 20th century observations prior to the species' extinction in the wild (After Harrison 1968: 346).

113; Harrison 1968: 346). In the early 20th century, it was believed that the Oryx occurred in Persia, as three specimens had been presented to the London Zoological Society by Col. Pelly, British Resident at Bushehr on the Persian Gulf and by Col. E.C. Ross, British Consul at Bushehr, in 1872 and 1890 (Sclater & Thomas 1900: 54). These specimens seem however to have come from Oman, rather than Iran (Carruthers 1935: 159-160, Harrison 1968: 346). In the south-eastern Arabian Peninsula, where the last individuals survived in the wild³, the gravel plains around the Rub'al-Khali desert brought the species within a few kilometres of the coast. Harrison's distribution map (Fig. 2) summarises what is known of the species distribution before its extinction in the wild.

There are few paleozoological records for *Oryx leucoryx*, however, Uerpmann (1987: 81) notes that these span most of the known range of the species in the Peninsula and Jordan. Tentative identifications were made on antelope remains from Abu Hureyra on the Upper Euphrates (Moore, Hilman and Legge 1975: 75).

³ The last individual was shot in Oman in 1972 (Stanley Price 1988: 18).



Fig. 2. Cylinder seal and imprint, Uruk/Djemdet Nasr period
(Photo © Royal Museum for Art and History, Brussels; inv. O.1406) depicting an Oryx and a deer between a tree and an architectural motif. (H. 3.7 cm, diam. 3 cm).

The archaeological evidence

Although no zoological or archaeozoological data indicate that the Arabian Oryx once occurred east of the Euphrates, or indeed further down the eastern coast of the Persian Gulf, an animal that can only be identified as an Oryx occasionally appears in ancient Iranian art. It should be noted that the species appears nearly as infrequently in the art of ancient Mesopotamia. Boehmer⁴ (1965: 28, 33-36) notes its presence in the glyptic art of the Akkadian period and Oryx images are found earlier in Uruk, Djemdet Nasr (Fig. 2) and Early Dynastic glyptic⁵. Later images seem to be exceedingly rare, if not absent.

In Iran, images of the Arabian Oryx seem to be limited to early 4th millennium BC glyptic (Susa I period and contemporary), 3rd millennium glyptic and to the chlorite vessels from Jiroft (3rd millennium BC).

Archaic Iranian glyptic provides a vast and unending source of information and inspiration for the study of ancient fauna. The fondness of the Proto-Elamites and their predecessors for depicting animals and the realism with which they did it makes it possible to look at the carvings and

⁴ Interestingly, in these instances, the Oryx nearly always appears as a small figure, spectator of a “combat scene” (Boehmer 1965: figs. 140, 160, 165, 173, 176, 191).

⁵ Van Buren (1939: 47-48) notes 23 Oryx representations in Mesopotamian glyptic, ranging from 6th millennium Tepe Gawra down to the very beginning of the 2nd millennium. Only a few of these can be identified with any degree of certainty, most are rendered too schematically to draw a definite opinion.



Fig. 3. Stamp seal, reportedly from Luristan, Musée du Louvre, inv. AO 26.506 (After Amiet 1979: fig. 3).

propose identifications with a good degree of precision. The Arabian Oryx appears on a number of seals among which the ones discussed here offer the most diagnostic characteristics.

1. Rectangular stamp seal (Fig. 3), reportedly from Luristan (Amiet 1979: 337), representing on one side an architectural motif, and on the other a bird and a standing Oryx recognisable by its long straight ridged horns⁶. This seal is part of a lot acquired by the Louvre museum from Mohsène Foroughi (Frye 2000) in the 1970's, all of which Amiet identifies as being from Luristan (Amiet 1979: 335). He proposes to date these rectangular stamp seals to the late 5th or early 4th millennium, perhaps contemporary to Susa I and to Tepe Gawra XI (Amiet 1980: 196).
Bibl.: Amiet 1979: fig. 3; 1980: 196.

2. Stamp seal from Susa (Fig. 4), dating to the Susa I level, depicts a standing Oryx surrounded by a cheetah, two birds and another smaller animal. A number of geometric shapes fill the remaining space. The Oryx is recognisable by its long fairly straight horns (although slanting forward

⁶ Amiet identifies this animal as a deer, which is possible, but the extreme straightness of the horns and the regularity with which the notches on the horns are rendered resembles more the horns of an Oryx than the antlers of a deer, for which an effort is generally made to render the branching and the slightly sinuous overall aspect.

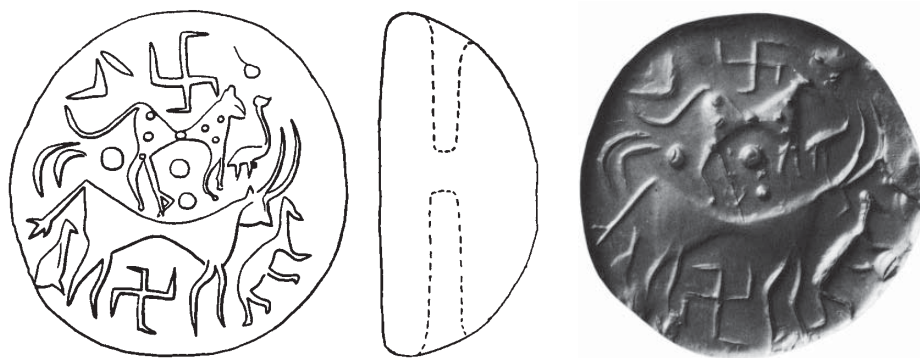


Fig. 4. Stamp seal, Suse I
(After de Mecquenem 1934: fig. 19 & Amiet 1972: fig. 143).

in a curious way), long tail ending in a tuft and stocky body⁷. (H. 2.9 cm, diam. 6.3 cm)

Bibl.: de Mecquenem 1934: 187, fig. 19 / Pope 1938: pl. 17-F / Le Breton 1957: 92, fig. 8 / Amiet 1966: fig. 22; 1972: fig. 143; 1979: fig. 3; 1980: fig. 110 / Porada 1993: pl. 37-3.

3. This large cylinder seal (Fig. 5), a beautiful example of the skill of ancient seal engravers, is conserved at the British Museum. It depicts two Oryx, two wild goats and a number of geometric and plant motives. Collon (1995: 56) attributes this seal, made of a volcanic tuff, to the Proto-Elamite style of south-western Iran (c. 3000 – 2700 BC). The Oryx are shown with great detail, the horns correctly ridged on two thirds of their length and the long tufted tail hanging down. (H. 4.9 cm, diam. 2.9 cm)

Bibl.: Wiseman 1962: pl. 7a / Strommenger 1964: fig. 34 / Collon 1995: 56, fig. 38c.

4. Cylinder seal from Susa (Fig. 6), dated by Amiet to the 3rd millennium (Old Elamite period), carries a principal motif of two affronted pairs of wild goats between which one finds a crouching Mouflon and a crouching Oryx. The latter is once again recognisable by its straight ridged horns and long tufted tail.

Bibl.: Amiet 1980: pl. 48bis G.

⁷ In Amiet 1980, the proposed identification for this animal is “caprid”. This seems rather unlikely in view of the shape of the horns, the length of the tail and the overall, rather bovid-like, aspect of the body. The slight curvature of the horns could point to a bull, but when comparing this seals to others of the same type where bulls are clearly depicted, one sees that the horns of these are distinctly shorter and forward-pointing. The body-build is also rather stockier.



Fig. 5. Cylinder Seal, Proto-Elamite style, c. 3000-2800 BC, British Museum (Photo © Trustees of the British Museum; inv. BM.116720).



Fig. 6. Seal impression from Susa, Pre-Dynastic period, Teheran Museum, inv. 1935 S. 48 (After Amiet 1980: Pl. 48bis G).

In 2001-2002, severe rains provoked the unexpected discovery and subsequent pillaging of a number of cemeteries in the Jiroft region, among the material of which delicately crafted chlorite vessels were discovered. Jiroft is situated in the Jazmourian depression on the southern edge of the Iranian plateau. The discovery ascertained the provenance of this type of object, the existence of which was already known through isolated finds. Although these objects were not found in situ, the locality from which they originated is known, and subsequent excavations in the area were able to situate them within the 3rd millennium BC (Perrot & Madjidzadeh 2005; 2006).

At least two of the vessels forming this assemblage are decorated with extremely naturalistic and recognisable Oryx, as indeed identified in the original publications (Perrot & Madjidzadeh 2005: 137). The long tail, straight horns, ridged on two thirds of their length, and general build leave little doubt as to their identification (Fig. 7-8, Pl. 3-4).



Fig. 7. Jiroft, chlorite vessel H. 13.2 cm, diam. 10.3 cm
(After Majidzadeh 2003: 32-33).



Fig. 8. Jiroft, chlorite vessel H. 18.8 cm, diam. 15 cm
(After Majidzadeh 2003: 24-26).

Two possibilities can be proposed to explain the presence of the Oryx on Iranian artefacts. Either these representations show local fauna, in which case an Oryx population inhabited the dry coastal areas of Iran, at least until the 3rd millennium, or one could argue that the close ties both between Susa and the Mesopotamian area and between the Jiroft region and the opposite Arabian Peninsula brought these charismatic animals to the knowledge of local craftsmen who chose to depict them among their local fauna. Both points of view are valid, and it is the former possibility that is explored in this article.

Climate change and environmental factors

During the glacial maximum (18000-13000 BC) the decrease of world sea level by 120 to 130 m lower than nowadays left the Persian Gulf entirely emerged. Pollen diagrams for this time show the predominance of desert steppes and saline depressions throughout the Near East, testifying to a cold and dry ambiance. In the Arabian Peninsula, where the climate was excessively arid, the great ergs of the Nefud and the Roub al-Khali

were reconstituted. At the end of the glacial age, the generalised warming of the climate made sea levels rise rapidly. The Persian Gulf, due to its shallow depth, remained entirely emerged until about 11500 BC, then began to rise rapidly as of 11000 BC⁸. Around 8000 BC, the waters covered about one third of their present day surface, effectively separating the Arabian Peninsula from the Iranian coast. The Gulf was fully inundated by 5000 BC (Sanlaville 2000: 176-178; Wilkinson 2003: 23-24).

Throughout the Early Holocene, the climate of the Near East became progressively warmer and more humid, until reaching present-day conditions around 11000 BC (Wilkinson 2003: 20). This trend was interrupted by a number of cold and dry episodes, the severest and longest of which, the Younger Dryas (10800 to 9500 BC), saw a return to the climatic conditions of the last glacial maximum, with the steppes and deserts progressing to the detriment of the tree species (Sanlaville 2000: 178). During the Holocene climate optimum, between 9500 and 4000 BC, the climate became progressively warmer and wetter than nowadays. A strong increase of tree pollens is observed on the palynological diagrams from the Ghab and the Houlé in the Arabian Peninsula, testifying to much more humid conditions, with in places a rather dense vegetation cover. A dry and windy episode, similar to the Younger Dryas, but shorter and less intense, saw a return to more arid conditions in the region between 6900 and 6400 BC (Sanlaville 2000: 179). As of 4000 BC, the climate fluctuated around present-day values, with a series of droughts between 3200 and 3000 BC, and around 2200 BC (Roberts 1998: 162-163).

With the Persian Gulf emerged, the desert fauna of the Arabian Peninsula found no obstacle to hinder its extension all the way to the foot of the Zagros Mountains. The Oryx in particular, highly adapted to the desert, with its habit of roaming vast distances in the pursuit of localised rainfalls and subsequent vegetation growths, would have likely ventured most readily into the arid plains left by the drying out of the Persian Gulf. The former sea-bottom appears to have been occupied by fields of dunes and sand flats through which the Euphrates and the Tigris traced their ways⁹. When

⁸ The shoreline receded at an average rate of about 140 m per year (Wilkinson 2003: 24).

⁹ On the landscape of the emerged Persian Gulf, Wilkinson (2003) notes that: "Teller and colleagues (2000) suggest that the extension of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers formed part of a marshy, lake-dotted environment... This vast lowland must have included large

sea levels rose again, small populations may have been trapped on the Iranian side. Human pressure and habitat deterioration would have then progressively driven these to extinction.

The extreme south-western and south eastern parts of Iran, where we postulate the presence of the Oryx, is constituted of the coastal lowlands along the Persian Gulf, a fairly narrow strip featuring mangroves, sand dunes and salines, and of the somewhat elevated calcareous terraces further inland that support a very poor savannah and pseudo-savannah vegetation, beyond which the Oryx would not have ventured. Zohary (1973) describes this vegetation zone as the *Acacietea flavae iranica*, one of the habitat types of the tropical deserts and savannahs that make up the Sudanian and sub-Sudanian vegetation zone, found in a wide belt, the width of which varies with topography, along the coasts of Iran and the Arabian Peninsula (Pl. 5). There is little inter-specific competition between wild grazing species in the Oryx's primary range, as diets and grazing habits differ greatly. Grazing competition is only an issue with goats, but the habitats of these species do not usually overlap¹⁰. This factor would thus not have been an impediment to the temporary colonisation of the eastern shores of the Persian Gulf by the Oryx.

The flora of this region, where the high temperatures and limited rainfall produce a tropical desert climate, is often comprised of *Acacia* associations and is generally xerophytic. In this respect, southern Iran has much in common with the Arabian Peninsula and the steppes, sand dunes, salines and desolate hamadas of Iran are strongly reminiscent of the Arabian habitats. It must also be noted that a number of plants are found on both sides of the Gulf of Oman, having crossed over in large numbers when eastern Arabia was connected to mainland Iran (Zohary 1973: 14, 37, 239, 253). The climate and vegetation at the end of the 4th and during the 3rd millennium BC would have been similar to what it is nowadays (Rossignol-Strick 2003).

areas of desert, because palaeoclimatic proxy data is unanimous in demonstrating that conditions were both colder and drier at this time".

¹⁰ Stanley Price 1989, p. 212.

Conclusions

Ever since the discovery by western taxonomists of the Arabian Oryx in the 18th century, evaluations of its historical range have regarded the Euphrates as its eastern limit. The relative impermeability between disciplines makes the use of the iconographical medium a difficult resource for biologists attempting to ascertain historic distribution ranges. This medium can however provide valuable, and to a certain extent, reliable, information (Devillers 2008). In the case of the Arabian Oryx, its ephemeral appearance in 4th and 3rd millennium iconography of south-western and south eastern Iran, an area environmentally suitable for the species, should be taken into account. Although arguments can be advanced against this interpretation, it now seems difficult to exclude the coastal regions of Iran and their hinterland from the historic range of the Arabian Oryx.

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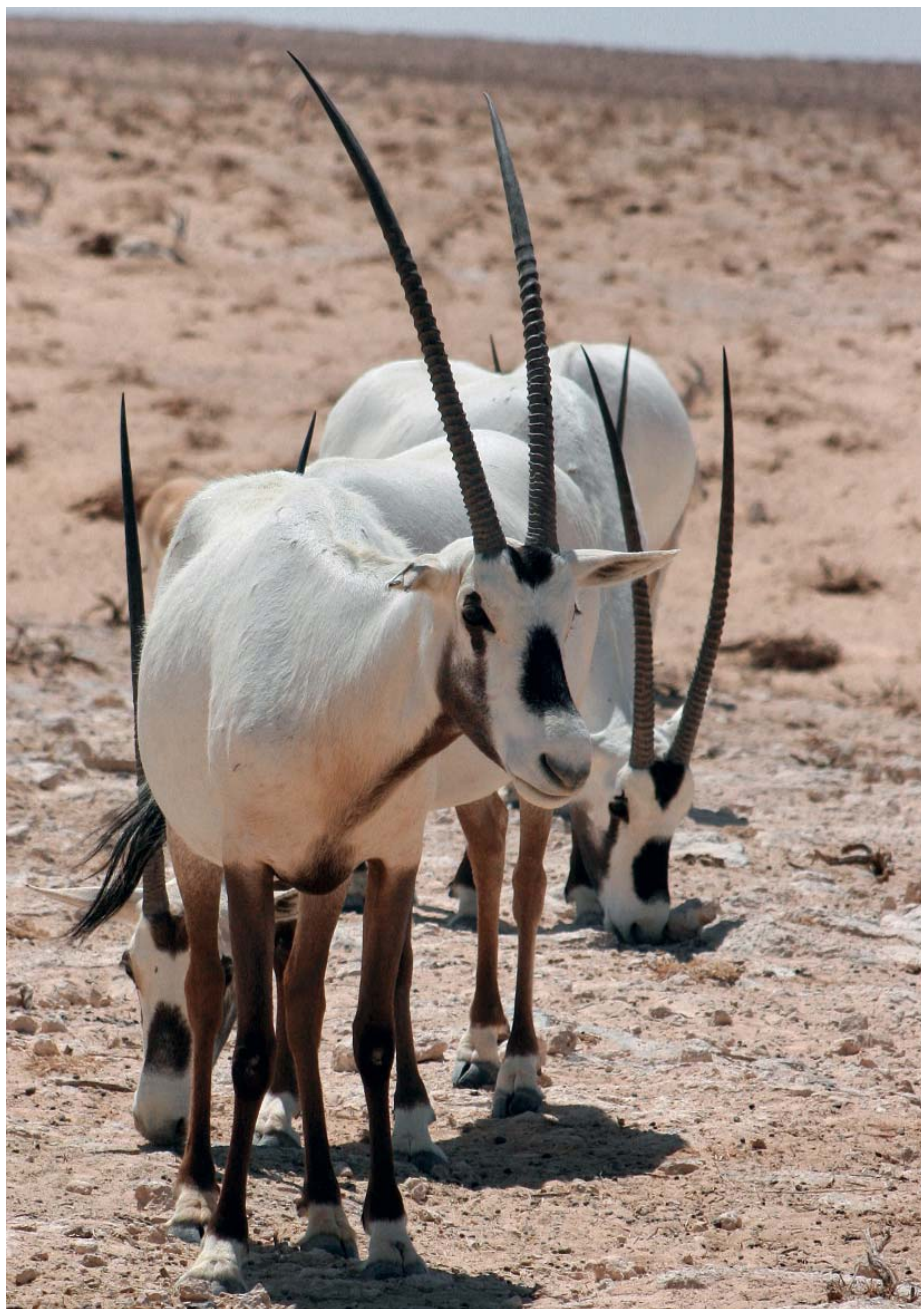
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Pl. 1. Reintroduced Oryx in Al Talila Wildlife Reserve, Palmyra, Syria.
Photo by the author.



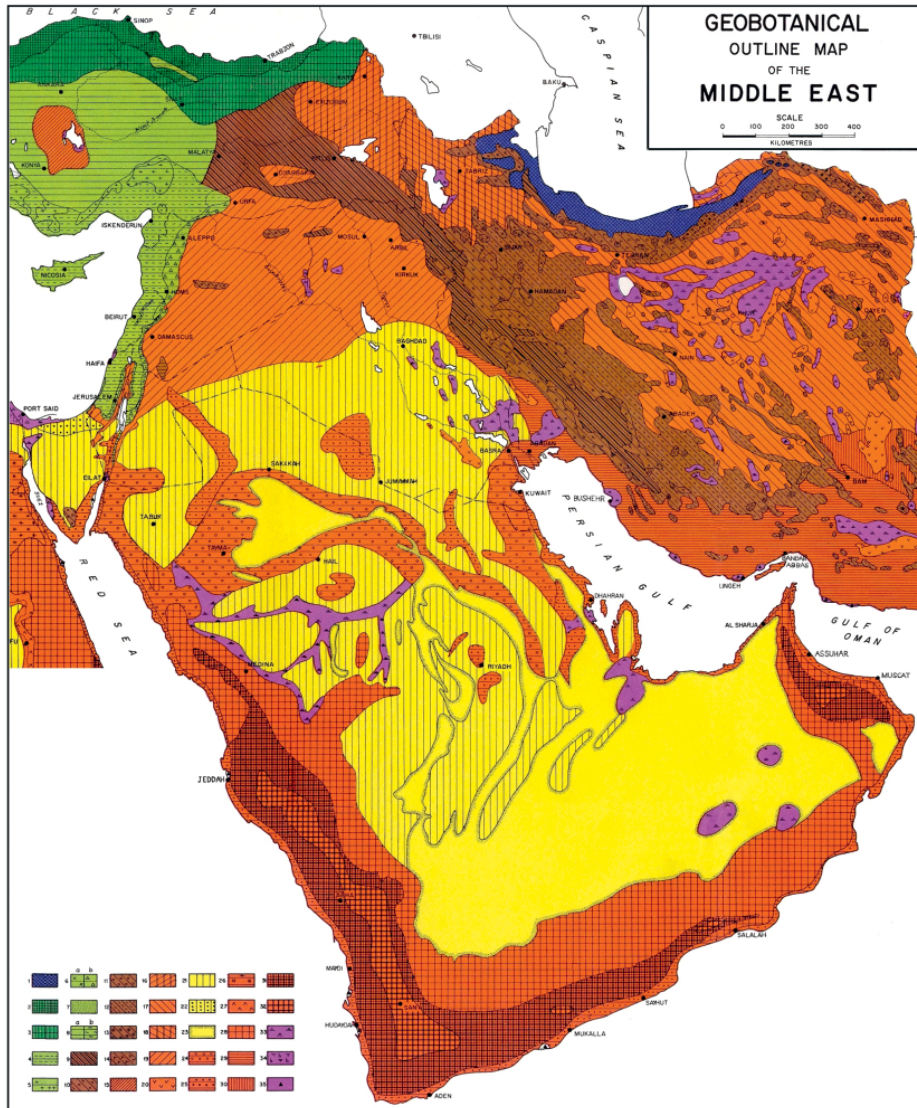
Pl. 2. Reintroduced Oryx in Al Talila Wildlife Reserve, Palmyra, Syria.
Photo by the author.



Pl. 3. Jiroft, chlorite vessel H. 13.2 cm, diam. 10.3 cm (After Majidzadeh 2003: 32-33).



Pl. 4. Jiroft, chlorite vessel H. 18.8 cm, diam. 15 cm (After Majidzadeh 2003: 24-26).



Pl. 5. Geobotanical map of the Middle East (Zohary 1973).
The Sudanian and Sub Sudanian vegetation area (tropical deserts and savannahs)
is shown in darker red, forming a belt along the coasts of the Arabian Peninsula
and Iran.

ZWISCHEN HUNDEN UND LÖWEN

VON

Peter CALMEYER^(†)¹

*Dem Gedächtnis Edith Poradas
zu ihrem hundertsten Geburtstag gewidmet*

Abstract: “Between dogs and lions”. Two stone troughs with sculptured decorations were seen at Susa in the first half of the 19th cent. AD and are now lost. Ker Porter and Loftus published drawings of them respectively. For a long time they were regarded as one and the same piece, differentiated only through the styles of the drawings. But it is obvious that the organization of the relief and the species of the animals are different. Both troughs show naked men lying on their backs, the animals, dogs resp. lions, touch them on their heads. It seems that this imagery allows a glimpse at the idea of human after-life in early Elam.

Keywords: Susa, early Proto-Elamite period, stone reliefs, netherworld.

Sir Robert Ker Porter, der uns in seiner präzisen, wenn auch etwas barockisierenden Zeichentechnik so zahlreiche Aufschlüsse über das Aussehen Irans und seiner Monumente hinterlassen hat (Vasileva 1994), konnte selbst nicht bis nach Susa gelangen. Doch er ließ zwei Denkmäler nach Skizzen des Majors Monteith umzeichnen, der nach Aussage von Loftus (1857: 417) im Jahr 1809 am Grab des Daniel gewesen war; eines davon bezeichnet er als Trog (Abb. 1) und teilt nach Monteith Material und Maße mit (Ker Porter 1822: 416 f., Fig. p. 417): „white marble“, 20 × 10 × 10 inches (50.8 × 25.4 × 25.4 cm).

1850 oder 1851, bei seinem ersten oder zweiten Aufenthalt in Susa, zusammen mit dem Zeichner H.K. Churchill sah William Loftus (1857: 415):

¹ Peter Calmeyer wrote this article in his last year, 1995, as a contribution to a memorial volume for Edith Porada, which never materialised. The manuscript was prepared for the present publication by U. Seidl who also added notes 13 and 15, references that appeared since 1995.



Abb. 1. Verschwundener Marmor-Trog, angeblich aus dem Hügel beim Danielsgrab in Shush, L. ca. 51 cm. — Zeichnung Ker Porter (1821/22: 417) nach Monteith.

“... very archaic sculptures upon a trough of yellow limestone, lying in the channel of the Sháour at the foot of Daniel’s tomb. Around the sides are two animals — doubtful wether dogs or lions — apparently about to devour two prisoners with their arms tied. As Sir R. Ker Porter gives an exceedingly rough and incorrect sketch of these animals, the annexed woodcut from Mr Churchill’s careful drawing is here inserted. Whether or not the scene herein represented is intended to commemorate the events which befell the prophet [Daniel], I leave to the consideration of my readers.”

Dazu bildete er eine Ansicht des Blockes nach dem oberen Teil der Zeichnung ab, die John Curtis in den Archiven des British Museum entdeckte und jüngst dankenswerter Weise publizierte (Curtis 1993: 14. 47, Pl. 12; danach hier Abb. 2). — Daß diese Zeichnung sehr vertrauenswürdig ist, wird man gerne glauben, obwohl seitdem leider keine Spur des Denkmals mehr bekannt wurde. Die Tiere nämlich entsprechen sehr genau denen auf dem elfenbeinernen Messergriff vom Gebel el-Arak (Abb. 3), womit noch einmal die enge Verbindung dieser Schnitzarbeit mit der frühesten susanischen Kunst belegt ist (Boehmer 1974; id. 1991; Sievertsen 1992). — Für unsere Zwecke entscheidend ist aber, daß hier in einer Darstellung eindeutig Löwen, sowohl angreifend als auch vom Heros bezwungen²,

² Zum Typus des Löwenbezwingers und seiner Verbindung mit Susa („Daniel“) vgl. Calmeyer 1994: 18-22.

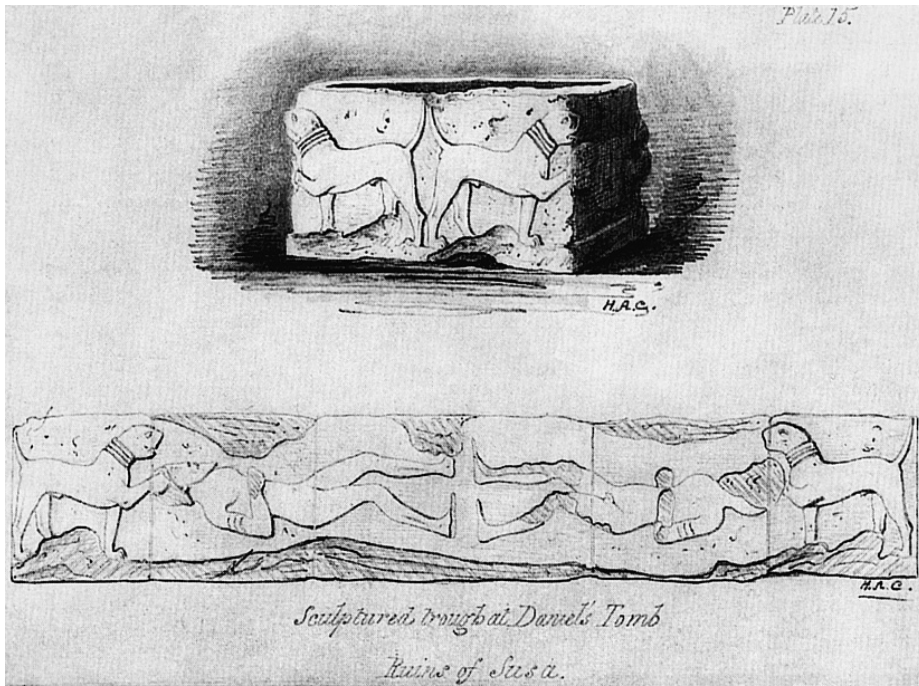


Abb. 2. Verschwundener Kalkstein-Trog aus dem Sha'ur beim Danielsgrab in Shush.
Maße unbekannt. — Zeichnung H. A. Churchill, nach Curtis 1993: 47, Pl. 12.

zusammen mit jenen Tieren vorkommen, wie wir sie vom Trog von Susa kennen. Wir können also getrost Loftus' Frage beantworten: seine menschenfressenden Untiere mit Nackenwulst und spitzen Ohren sind Hunde. Auf dem Messergriff scheinen sie zum Schutz der Herde bestellt zu sein. — So eng die formale Beziehung sein mag, so gegensätzlich ist die Aussage: hier triumphiert der Mensch, und die großen Hunde sind seine Helfer — dort ist er gefesselt und wird von ihnen verschlungen.

Wie wir gesehen haben, hielt Loftus die Zeichnung bei Ker Porter ohne Diskussion für die desselben Objektes³ — nur eben *rough and incorrect*. Doch da melden sich allerlei Bedenken. Roh ist jene Zeichnung (Abb. 1) keineswegs. Man muß sich vielmehr fragen, wie die Hunde durch derart elegante Löwen ersetzt werden konnten. War die Vorstellung schockierend, daß Hunde so etwas tun könnten? Wie konnten Monteith oder Ker

³ Ebenso Calmeyer 1973: 137 und Curtis 1993: 14.

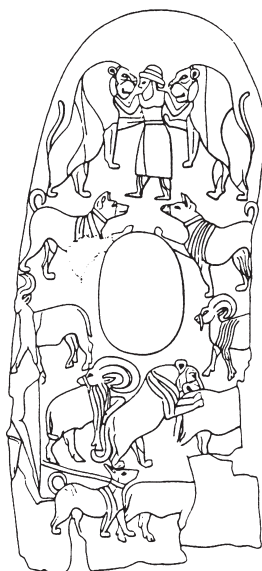


Abb. 3. Nilpferdbeeriner Messergrieff vom Gebel Al-Arak. —
Zeichnung nach Boehmer 1991: 55, Abb. 6a.

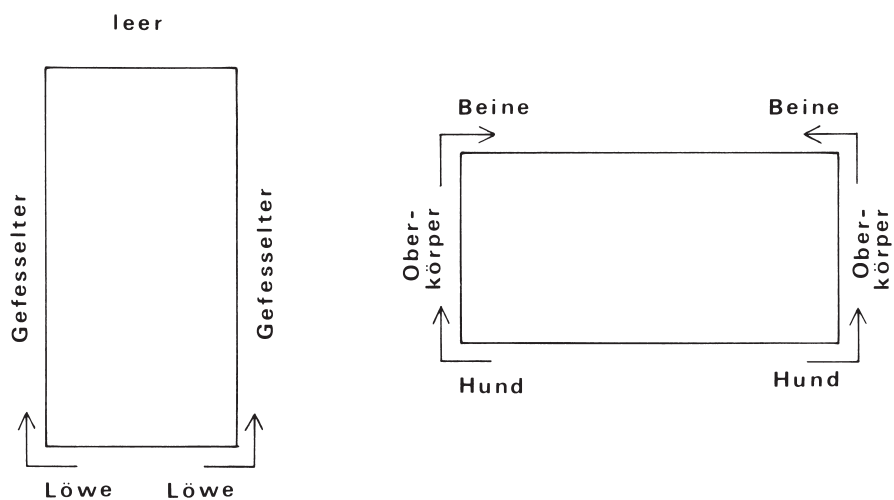


Abb. 4. Schema der Darstellungen auf den Trögen. Zeichnung R. Klein.

Porter ahnen, daß von Löwen gefressene Menschen ein Thema der Kunst im späten 4. Jahrtausend war (Abb. 5) — wie wir erst seit 1966 wissen⁴? und wie konnten sie die Gestalt der wie aufgeplusterten, voluminösen Löwen mit ihren steif erhobenen Schwänzen so gut treffen, deren Vergleichsstücke (Abb. 5; Taf. 1) erst jetzt bekannt sind?

Bei näherer Betrachtung kommt noch ein zweiter, wesentlicher Unterschied hinzu: der der Aufteilung der Reliefs auf die Tröge. Durch die Abrollung von der Hand H.K. Churchills (Abb. 2 unten) wissen wir nun, daß eine der Langseiten von den Beinen zweier Männer eingenommen wurde, deren Oberkörper sich auf den anschließenden Schmalseiten fortsetzen; auf der vierten (Lang-)Seite stoßen die beiden Hunde dos à dos aneinander. Bei Ker Porter nimmt dagegen ein Liegender eine ganze Langseite ein; die Löwen, wiederum dos à dos und durch ihre hockende Stellung gedrängter als die Hunde, füllen nur eine Schmalseite. Der entferntere Löwe erzwingt die Annahme eines weiteren Liegenden, und das entspricht auch der Beschreibung (Ker Porter 1921/22: 416 f.):

“Three of its sides are cut in bas-relief; two of them with similar representations of a man, apparently naked, except a sash around his waist, and a sort of a cap on his head. His hands are bound behind him. The corner of the stone holds the neck of the figure, so that his head forms part of one of its ends. Two lions, in sitting postures, appear on either side at the top, each having a paw on the head of the man.”

⁴ Nagel 1966: 30-41, Taf. II-X: Schlangenbecken und Kupferbecher. — Die Echtheit des Schlangenbeckens (hier Abb. 5, Taf. 1) sollte nicht bezweifelt werden: ausnahmsweise war es möglich, sie durch zwei Fragmente aus Uruk sogleich zu beweisen (Nagel 1966: 32, Taf. VIII 4-5; vgl. S. 22 Abb. 5b). O.W. Muscarella 1977: 188 no. 208, hat das wohl überlesen, wenn er fordert, es „*should not be accepted unless convincing comparisons are presented*“; er ist mit Recht dafür von E. Strommenger 1976/77: 321, gescholten worden. Muscarella's Erwiderung (1980/81: 119) zeigt, daß er immer noch nicht die ausgegrabenen Parallelstücke zur Kenntnis nimmt; dafür zitiert er seltsamerweise einen ungenannten deutschen Kollegen für das Stück. — Falls noch weitere, diesmal stilistische Parallelen gewünscht werden: Die Beine des Mannes unter dem Löwen (hier Abb. 5, Taf. 1C) sind in einer Art Schrittstellung angegeben, ganz ähnlich wie auf unseren Trögen (hier Abb. 1, 2); die überraschend starke Muskulatur der Unterschenkel des gepeinigten Mannes kehrt wieder auf einer verlorenen Stele aus Uruk (Loftus 1857: 185 f.; Curtis 1986 [nach W. Boucher]; Becker 1993: 58 f. Nr. 784, Taf. 38). — Heinrich (1934: 12 f.) hatte ohne Abbildung, die Verwandtschaft der Löwenjagdstele mit Loftus' Beschreibung erkannt.

Es ergeben sich damit zwei gänzlich verschieden arrangierte Tröge (Abb. 4). Alles das können unmöglich »Inkorrektheiten« eines (oder zweier) Zeichner sein — schon gar nicht von einem Zeichner, der den Liegenden (vgl. Abb. 2) offenbar so gut getroffen hat. Es ergibt sich daraus der Schluß, daß wir es mit zwei verschiedenen Trögen zu tun haben: einem, den Monteith 1809 sah, und einen anderen, den Loftus 1850/1 im Flußbett am Fuß von Daniels Grab liegend fand. In den 30iger Jahren sah H. C. Rawlinson (1839: 70) am Ufer des Flusses einen Felsblock mit „Daniel“ in der Löwengrube; 1841 besuchte A. H. Layard Susa; er berichtet später (1887: II, 296 f.; 1894: 353):

“I found the remains of a flight of steps, built of large dressed stones, leading down to the water’s edge. Amongst them was a slab, with bas-relief which has been described as a man between two lions, and has been converted by a lively imagination into Daniel in the lion’s den. It was partly concealed, and I could only distinguish the legs of a man.... the dervish assured me that it represented not one but two human figures, as well as two lions.”

In einer Anmerkung der ersten Auflage fügt Layard hinzu:

“This slab was subsequently uncovered by Colonel (afterwards Sir Fenwick) Williams, and a drawing is given of it in Mr. Loftus’s account of the excavations at Susa...”

Da Layard nur die menschlichen Beine sah, können wir nicht sagen, welcher der Tröge es gewesen sein mag und ob der Dervisch Hunde als Löwen interpretierte. Rawlinson hatte mit großer Wahrscheinlichkeit dieses Stück gesehen. Andererseits gibt es offensichtliche Gemeinsamkeiten beider Tröge:

- beide haben längsrechteckige Grundrisse, wobei die Langseite ungefähr der doppelten Schmalseite entspricht;
- sie sind auf gleiche Arte ausgehöhlt — leider wissen wir nicht, wie tief⁵;

⁵ Der Vergleich mit Statuenbasen (Calmeyer 1973: 137) ist gewiß ganz falsch: im Alten Orient enthalten diese, soweit wir wissen, allenfalls Zapflöcher, aber keine großen

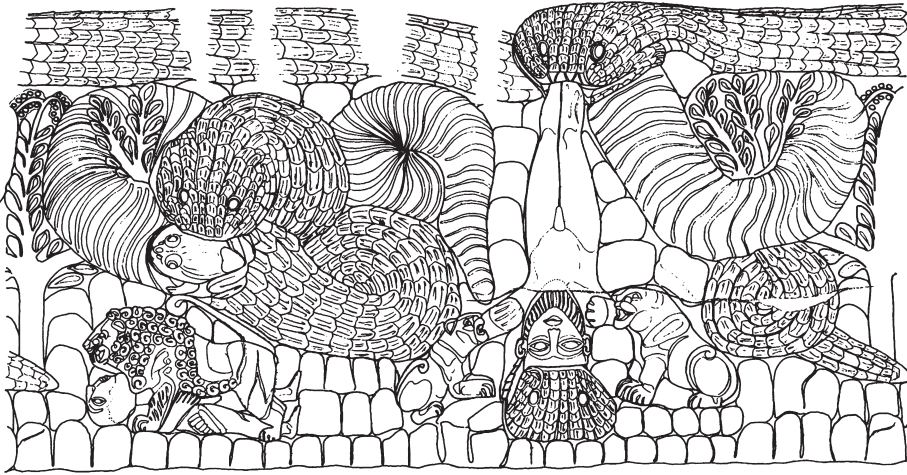


Abb. 5. Abrollung des Dekors des „Schlangenbeckens“. —
Zeichnung G. Hecker, nach Nagel 1966: Abb. in Tasche.

- die liegenden Gefesselten sind einander gleich in Motiv, Umriß und Bewegung;
- beide Darstellungen greifen um die Ecken herum⁶.

Es muß sich nach alledem um zwei Stücke derselben Serie gehandelt haben, etwas kleiner als die bekannte Alabaster-Wanne im British Museum mit ihrer schrägen Wandung und verwandte Stücke (Strommenger 1962: 18, 56, Taf. 23; Lindemeyer/Martin 1993: 94, Taf. 38-40, Nr. 336 f.), größer als die steilwandigen Stein-Pyxiden späterer Zeit aus dem Diyala-Gebiet (Delougaz/Lloyd 1942: 104, Fig. 98). Über ihren einstigen Zweck wissen wir leider nichts.

Etwas weiter können uns vielleicht die Überlegungen zur Funktion des wichtigsten Vergleichstückes, des Schlangen-„Beckens“ bringen (Abb. 5, Taf. 1). Seine Kapazität als Becken wäre sehr gering: ausgehöhlt ist nur ein Raum geringen Umfangs (Nagel 1966: Taf. VII 1) mit der Tiefe von

Hohlräume für Plinthen, wie in der griechischen Plastik; die längliche Form ist ebenfalls ungeeignet.

⁶ Solche seitenübergreifenden Darstellungen (vgl. Boehmer 1991: 53) sind ganz typisch für die frühe Kunst vor der Einführung der Geradansichtigkeit; vgl. auch die hochplastischen, engen Reliefgefäße im Djemdet Nasr-Stil.

höchstens einem Viertel des gesamten Steins; auf dem leicht gerundeten Boden sind zwei kleine, runde, ziemlich flache Löcher eingetieft. Man könnte an die Tendenz zu Steingefäßen mit kleinem Rauminhalt bei üppiger plastischer Reliefwandung in der Djemdet Nasr-Kunst denken⁷, doch ist hier das Mißverhältnis gar zu groß. Wegen der kleinen Löcher liegt es näher, an ein Zapfloch zu denken: vielleicht war eine weitere Figur, aus einem anderen Material, hier oben eingelassen. Analog zu dem gleichzeitig erworbenen und angeblich vom selben Fundort stammenden kupfernen Trichtergefäß (Nagel 1966: 40, Abb. 6, Taf. X) könnte es ein Raubvogel oder eine Gruppe von Vögeln gewesen sein.

Die Datierung der ganzen Gruppe von Steindenkmälern hat sich bereits indirekt ergeben durch die verglichenen Stücke. Am besten datiert sind der Messergriff (Abb. 3) — in die Phase Naqada IIIa, die der Djemdet Nasr-Zeit entspricht (Boehmer 1991: 59 f. „um 3300 v. Chr.“) — und die Fragmente aus dem „Sammelfund“ in Uruk IIIa/II (Heinrich 1936: 40, Taf. 30 g. f; Nagel 1966: 32, Taf. VIII 4. 5; Lindemeyer/Martin 1993: 160, Taf. 67 Nr. 1095 [„archaisch“ III/I7]).

Zur Deutung dieser herausfordernden Bilder lassen sich leider nur Assoziationen anbieten, da wir ja aus dieser Zeit keine lesbaren literarischen Texte haben, und weil Analogien aus historischer Zeit kaum vorhanden sind. Der Fundort Susa drängt zunächst die Deutung „Daniel in der Löwengrube“ auf: so ging es ja auch den Einwohnern von Shush. Doch steht dem entgegen, daß dieser ja eben nicht angegriffen wurde und daß es hier später ein Heiligtum mit *zahmen* Löwen gab (Aelian, Hist. Anim. XII 23); wir haben hier einen Wandel der örtlichen Tradition von der Peinigung zur Errettung zu konstatieren (vgl. Calmeyer 1994: 18-22). Außerdem läßt der Fundort der Tröge in der Nähe des Danielgrabes⁸ einen umgekehrten Vorgang vermuten: das zur Sasanidenzeit oben in der Festung bezeugte Danielgrab (Calmeyer 1994: 21) wurde vielleicht an den Sha'ur verlegt, *weil* hier derartige Reliefs zu Tage traten.

Zur Tötung von meist gefesselten Nackten bieten sich zunächst die gleichzeitigen Siegelbilder aus Uruk (Brandes 1979: 117-173, Taf. 1-10,

⁷ Moortgat 1939 dachte an Räuchergefäße; Lindemeyer/Martin 1993: 87 f., Taf. 34, Nr. 281/82.

⁸ Trog Monteith / Abb. 1: „found, the dervish told him, in the great mound of the palace, near the tomb of the prophet“ (apud Ker Porter 1821/22: 416);

Trog Loftus /Abb. 2: „lying in the channel of the Sháour at the foot of Daniel's tomb“ (Loftus 1857: 415).

11-12: durch löwenköpfige Vögel) und Susa (Amiet 1966: 64 no. 29, 86 no. 45) an, auf denen nackte, an den Händen gefesselte Männer geschlagen oder erschossen werden; in frühdynastischer Zeit ist dieses Thema beinahe⁹ verschwunden. Das paßt zu der Theorie I. Gelbs, nach der in extensiven Landwirtschaften versklavte Kriegsgefangene nicht gebraucht wurden, Kriegsgefangene also getötet werden mußten (Gelb 1972: 85). Sollte die staatliche Autorität, auf den Siegeln der „Priesterkönig“, hier durch Tiere vertreten worden sein?

Doch einmal passen Hunde (Abb. 2) nicht in diese Rolle; zweitens aber läßt der Anblick des Schlangensockels (Abb. 5, Taf. 1) keine Deutung auf einen staatlichen Triumph zu: hier, in einer Welt übermächtiger Tiere, steht der passive Mensch im Mittelpunkt und fordert unser Mitgefühl.

Leidet er? C. Hentze (1970/73: 134-136, Abb. 47-50) hat vorgeschlagen, den Vorgang als eine Geburt zu verstehen¹⁰. Gewiß ist die Schlange, die ihre Haut hinter sich läßt, ein weltweit bekanntes Symbol für (Wieder) geburt, so wie der Frosch für die Fruchtbarkeit; Mensch und reproduzierendes Tier sind offenbar in der gleichen Situation. Im rundansichtigen Ganzen des Sockels bildet der Frosch (Taf. 1C) das genaue Gegenstück zum Menschen, ist Teil der Hauptszene.

Doch was tut die dritte Schlange? Handelt es sich um einen Wechsel, einen Kreislauf von Geburt und Tod durch die allmächtigen Schlangen? Dem stehen die beteiligten Löwinnen entgegen, die ja schon die Ellenbogen des Mannes verschlungen haben, ebenso die Nebenszene (Taf. 1C unten), in der der Löwe über einen Bekleideten triumphiert¹¹ — wie auf dem Trog aus Susa (Abb. 1), wo es kein Anzeichen für eine Geburt gibt.

Außerdem hat der Bildhauer, der nicht nur in der Sorgfalt der Details und in der aufs Höchste gesteigerten Plastizität sich als großer Künstler erweist, alles getan, um uns die Unheimlichkeit des Vorgangs nahe zu bringen. Die Löwen, sonst die klassischen Feinde der Mesopotamier und ihrer Herden (vgl. Abb. 3), sind hier vergleichsweise klein und fast nur

⁹ Eine Ausnahme bildet eine Weihtafel aus Tello (Parrot 1948: 70-72, Abb. 17c).

¹⁰ Auf die recht wilde komparative Methode Hentzes kann ich hier nicht eingehen. Ein Beispiel für „Geburt“ von Kopf und Fuß her kann auch er nicht beibringen; S. 135 gibt er zu, die beißenden Löwen nicht deuten zu können.

¹¹ Zum Thema zuletzt: Mayer-Opificius 1993. Im Gegensatz dazu halte ich den monumentalen Löwen von Babylon immer noch für frühzeitlich: das Datum des Transport ist ja von dem der Herstellung unabhängig

lästige Plagen am Rande; es sind die riesigen Schlangen¹², die das Hauptgeschehen bestimmen und die die Landschaft, Berge und Baum, bekrönen oder belasten, auf jeden Fall beherrschen. Auch die Berge waren später unheimlich: Heimat von Feinden, Ort der Tötung legendärer Helden und sogar Göttern und manchmal Chiffre der Unterwelt¹³.

Damit sind wir bei dem dritten Komplex von Assoziationen. Auch hier geht die Deutung keineswegs glatt auf. Zwar ist die Unterwelt voll von Schrecken erregenden Wesen — aber erst sehr spät¹⁴; je weiter man in der Literatur zurück geht, desto öder und trister wird sie geschildert (vgl. Bottéro 1980). Außerdem sind die Handlanger der Hölle meistens Mischwesen (Wiggermann 1994: 224); der dort regierende Hofstaat des Nergal/Erra (von Weiher 1971, dazu Lambert 1973; Schretter 1974: 99-110; Dalley 1987) dagegen ist offenbar anthropomorph. Die oft, ohne endgültigen Beweis, mit Nergal zusammengebrachten altbabylonischen Terrakottareliefs eines mumifizierten Gottes (Opificius 1961: 90-94, Nr. 291-310, Taf. 7; Barrelet 1968: 181 f., Pl. XII-XIII no. 132-139) sind in ihrer kleinteiligen Accessoire-Freudigkeit unseren wahrhaft archaischen Bildern erst recht fremd. Eher heranzuziehen ist eine von Schlangen umwickelte Gottheit (Wiggermann 1994: 244, 246, Abb. 34b).

Man mag sich fragen, wie Hunde in eines dieser Deutungsmuster passen. Immerhin war auch den alten Akkadern gelegentlich bewußt, daß sie Leichen fressen können, wie ein Stelenfragment des Sargon zeigt (Amiet 1976: 8-10, Fig. 2b, 73 no. 1d). Am bekanntesten sind sie als Wächterfiguren (Faraone 1987: 266-275; 1992: 21 ff.). Schließlich ist daran zu erinnern, daß durch Hunde der gute Tod eines Zarathustriers gesichert wird, durch hundegestaltige Wesen Armenier wiederaufgeweckt werden wollten (Russel 1987: 40, 400, 416-425). Allerdings sind diese Vorstellungen zeitlich und örtlich weit entfernt vom susanischen Trog.

Schließlich hat gewiß noch jeder kundige Betrachter des Sockels die leidenden, sterbenden und wieder auferstehenden Götter assoziiert, vor

¹² Eindeutig unheilvoll ist auch die Rolle der Schlangen als Fessel nackter Kniender aus dieser Zeit: Nagel 1966: 34 Anm. 10; zuletzt Porada 1992; vgl. Morandi Bonacossi 1996: Abb. 4, der diese Figur für später hält.

¹³ Zu der Gestaltung des „Sockelbeckens“ als Berg/Gebirge und der Bezeichnung *kur*/„Berg“ für das Jenseits paßt sehr gut die Analyse des Begriffs in jüngeren sumerischen Texten von Katz 2003: 63-112; 112. (U. Seidl)

¹⁴ Die „Unterwelts-Vision eines assyrischen Kronprinzen“ wird gewöhnlich mit Assurbanipal verbunden (Livingston 1989: 68-76; mit Lit. S. 68, Anm. 32).

allem den populärsten, Dumuzi/Tammuz (Jacobsen 1970: 73-82; id. 1976: 47-73; id. 1987: 28-84). Er wird mehrfach gepeinigt, von vielen Gegnern, an Hals, Händen, Füßen und am Rücken; doch sind seine Gegner offenbar keine Tiere, sondern Menschen und Gebirge (Jacobsen 1987: 47).

Endlich ist noch ein kleines Rundbild aus bituminösem Material im Musée du Louvre zu erwähnen (Rutten 1935: 175 oben; Nagel 1963: 47, Taf. XIV 1; hier Taf. 2-3)¹⁵. Einmal stammt er aus Susa, ist also wohl ähnlichen Vorstellungen verhaftet wie die Tröge; zum zweiten erscheinen hier Mann und Löwe auf seltsame Weise verschränkt: das Menschengesicht erscheint im aufgerissenen Löwenmaul, doch der Körper dazu hockt, anscheinend unangefochten, unterhalb des Löwenkopfes (Taf. 2-3). Auf für uns unverständliche Art scheinen Mensch und Raubtier hier zu verschmelzen, was M. Rutten (1935: 175) an eine Chimaira erinnert. Die extreme Plastizität der Männerfigur ist der des Schlangensockels (Taf. 1) gut vergleichbar.

Zweck dieser Bemerkungen war zu zeigen, daß es mehr Zeugnisse für dieses Thema aus dem späten 4. Jahrtausend gibt, als uns bisher bewußt war. Ein weiteres ist durch D. Morandi Bonacossi (1996) hinzu gekommen. Wenn die —notwendig späteren— Schriftzeugnisse zu ihnen nicht recht passen wollen, so mag uns eine Beobachtung der besten Kenner der Welt der Monster trösten: die Urahnen der später immer künstlicher zusammengesetzten Mischwesen waren wohl einfache Tiere (Wiggemann 1994: 225 f.; Green 1994: 247 f.), aber dennoch zutiefst ungeheuerlich.

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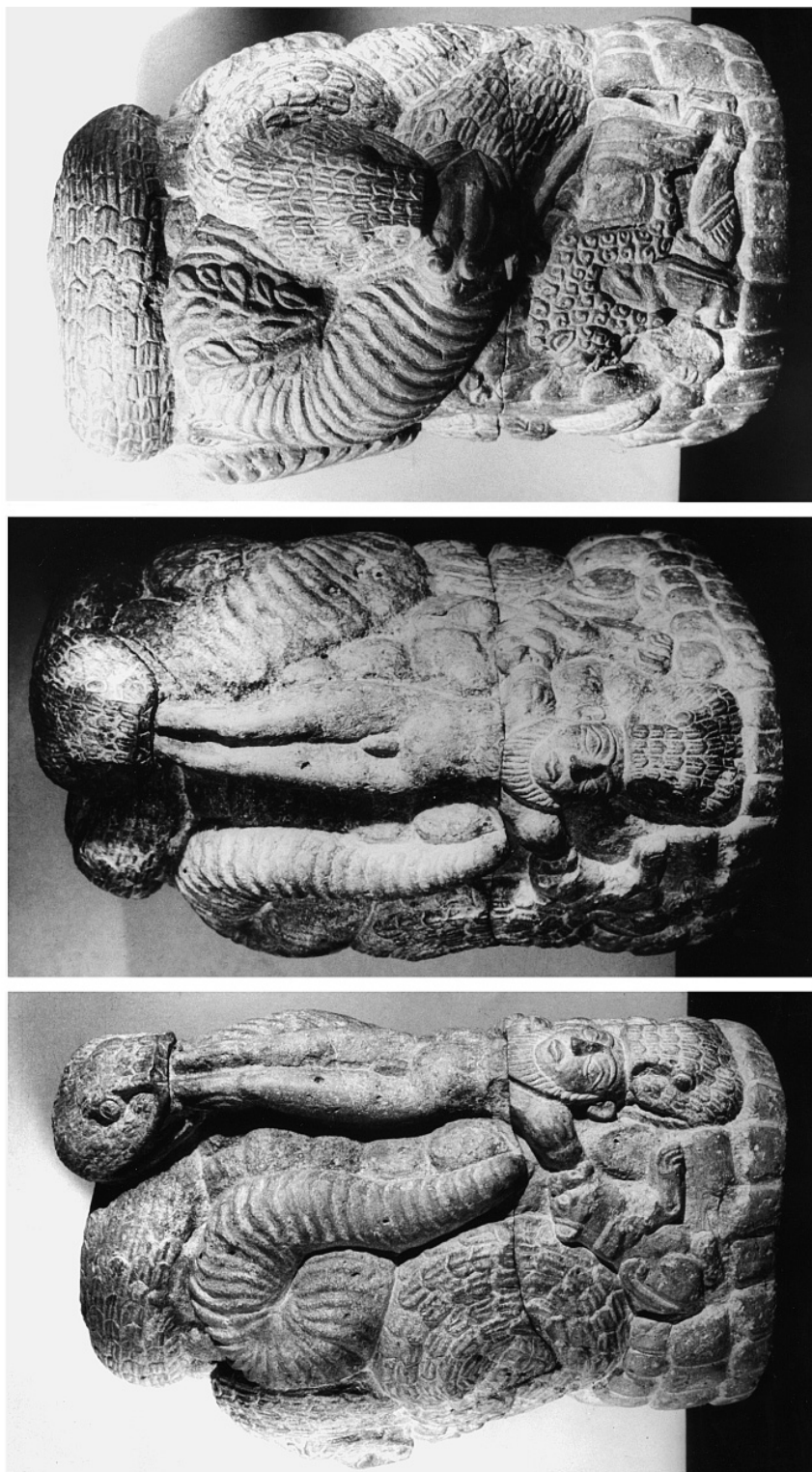
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¹⁵ Nach Beendigung des Manuskripts publiziert: Connan / Deschesne 1996: 226, Fig. 31, 263 f. no. 238. Die jüngere Datierung anhand einzelner Antiquaria an die Wende vom 3. zum 2. Jahrtausend kann nicht überzeugen. (U. Seidl)

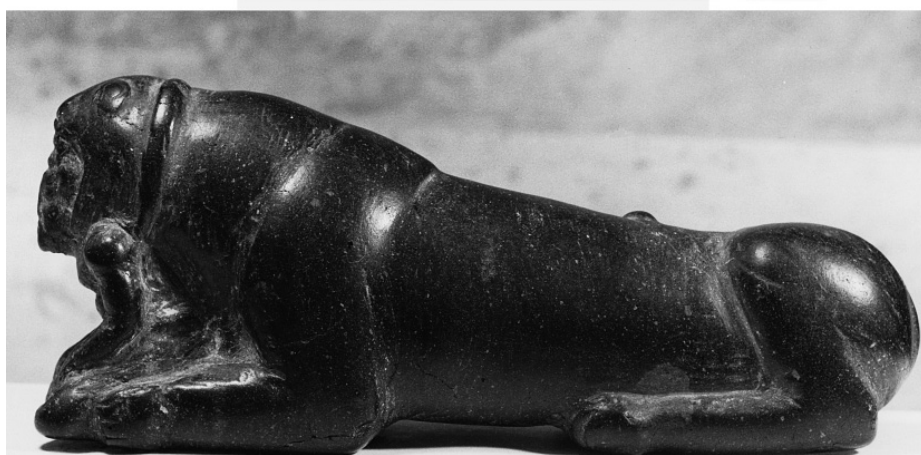
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Taf. 1. „Schlangenbecken“ im Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Berlin. — Photogr. Museum.



Taf. 2. Bitumen-Rundbild eines Löwen und eines Mannes aus Susa im Louvre. —
Photogr. B. Grunewald.



Taf. 3. Bitumen-Rundbild eines Löwen und eines Mannes aus Susa im Louvre. —
Photogr. B. Grunewald.

AN EARLY BRONZE AGE TOMB NEAR KHORRAMABAD (W-IRAN) HERZFELD'S GILVIRAN REVISITED

BY

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Abstract: Ernst Herzfeld made mention of the discovery in 1928 of a Bronze Age tomb at Gilviran, some 5 km from Khorramabad in Luristan. He discussed the site briefly and illustrated some of the finds; two of the bronze vases were later acquired by the British Museum. Since it was one of the few tombs in Pish-i Kuh, Luristan on which some reliable information was known, the Gilviran discovery is mentioned in most studies on Luristan. Nevertheless, little more than a description and a few illustrations of some of the finds were available. A more complete picture of the Gilviran tomb is now presented based on Herzfeld's original notes and the identification of a preserved section of the tomb on the outskirts of present day Khorramabad.

Keywords: Bronze Age tomb, Ernst Herzfeld, Gilviran, Gilweran, Khorramabad, Luristan, Iran

In 1928 Ernst Herzfeld accompanied Reza Shah Pahlavi on his trip between Borudjird, Khorramabad and Khuzistan. On 16 November 1928 the party left at 7 o'clock Pul-i Zal, to the North of Andimeshk, reached Pul-i Dokhtar (Herzfeld 1929/30: Taf. IX, bottom) some 100 km South of Khorramabad by 9:30, Pul-i Kalhur (Herzfeld 1929/30: Taf. IX, top) by 11:45 and eventually arrived at Khorramabad by 1:35 in the afternoon (Pl. 8). It was probably the same day that Ernst Herzfeld paid a visit to the site of Gilviran where a megalithic tomb had been accidentally discovered. It is unknown when exactly this discovery took place, but since it was set in a slope bordering the road it was probably exposed by erosion or stumbled upon during roadwork.

Herzfeld reported on Gilviran in his article "*Bericht über archäologische Beobachtungen im südlichen Kurdistan und in Luristan*" (Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran I, 1929/30: particularly pp. 70-71, Taf. VI & VII). Later he also mentioned the site and provided illustrations of two

bronze vessels in his “*Iran and the Ancient East*” (Herzfeld 1941: 114, fig. 226, Pl. XXV). These two decorated bronze vessels with long open spout remained in Herzfeld’s possession and were eventually acquired by the British Museum in 1936. Calmeyer discussed the two vases together with several similar specimens in his groundbreaking “*Datierbare Bronzen aus Luristan und Kirmanshah*” and called the type “*Schnabeltöpfe vom Typ Gilviran*” (Calmeyer 1969: 14-17, Abb. 10-14), a label still in use for this type of vessel (see Müller-Karpe 1993: 27).

Although Gilviran could only be vaguely located and only a small selection of the finds was known, the rarity of first hand information on Luristan and the exceptional quality of the bronze vessels explain why the site remains a key reference in Luristan research (Vanden Berghe 1959: 87; Nagel 1964: 18, 93-102, Taf. 70, 4-5; Calmeyer 1968; 1969: 14-17, Abb. 10-14; Goff 1971: 147, fig. 8; Hennessey 1993: 133; Belleli 2002: 15-16, 8). It is, however, now possible to gain a much more complete and accurate picture of the Gilviran tomb using Herzfeld’s original notes and sketchbooks¹. Furthermore, Herzfeld’s unpublished drawing of the tomb allowed us to identify what is left of the actual tomb during our survey in Luristan in September 2003.

Although he does not specifically state it in his report, it seems likely that Herzfeld arrived at the Gilviran Bronze Age tomb shortly after it had been discovered and that the excavation had already started or had even been finished. Emptying a 5.20 m long corridor shaped tomb of 1.20-1.50 m wide and 1.50-1.80 m high takes time and Herzfeld only passed through Khorramabad, probably staying just one night. His diary states that he arrived in Khorramabad at 13:35 on November 16 and all the entries on the tomb and all drawings are listed under this date. Furthermore, his trip

¹ Herzfeld’s notes and sketchbooks are kept at the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. For a survey see Hennessey 1993. An online inventory and research tool is available at: http://www.asia.si.edu/archives/finding_aids/herzfeld.html. The relevant pages for Gilviran are: Travel Journals N-47 pages 57-62 / Sketchbooks – SK-XI Pasargadae III, 1928 pages 44-47 / Drawings and Maps [1903-1947], drawing N° D-680 / Subseries 4.1.2: Vol. 2 Print N° 19 / Photo File 3 “Pre-Achaemenian Objects” – Image N° 98-104. The site is mentioned in the files as Gilweran-Khurramabad, Gilviran, Gilweran, Gilwerān or Gilwērān. We are indebted to Dr. Ann Gunter, Mrs Linda M. Raditz, Mr. David Hogge, Mrs. Betsy Kohut and the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives for assistance in locating and obtaining the documents and permission to reproduce them in the present paper.

with Reza Shah had ended by November 19 (the journal bears the caption "Trip to Khurramābād and Ahwaz". 1928 October 25–November 19). This idea is further confirmed by the lack of precision in Herzfeld's notes, which stands in contradiction with his usual practice. Herzfeld does not mention anything about the original location of the finds in the tomb; he

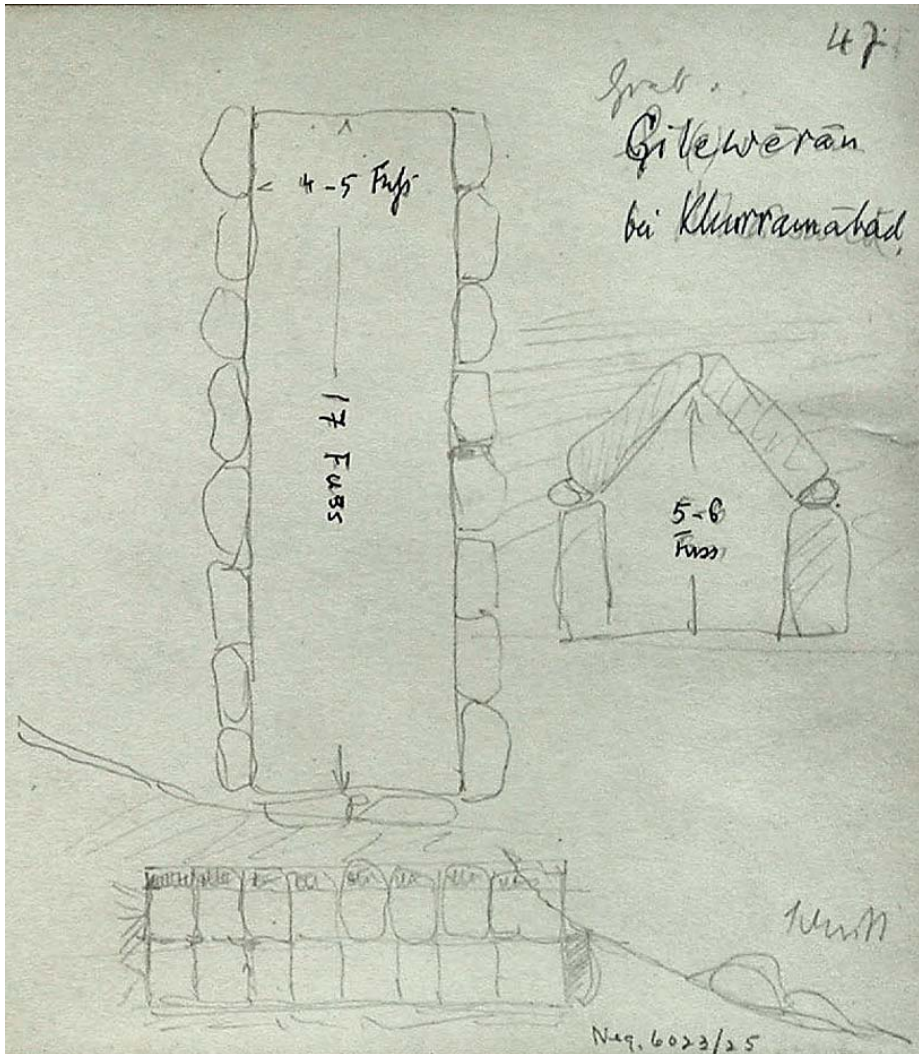


Fig. 1. Herzfeld's sketch of the Gilviran tomb
(Sketchbooks – SK-XI Pasargadae III, 1928 page 47; ©Freer Gallery of Art
and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.)

only provides sketches of the tomb and of a selection of the finds. He did not know the exact number of small pottery vessels and includes some hearsay in his comments (small vessels were said to have contained grain “*kleinerer Töpfe, in denen Überbleibsel von Korn gewesen sein sollen*” Herzfeld 1929/30: 70). He also wrote that the burial contained several inhumations, but that he could “no longer” see bones (“*mehrere gleichzeitige Beisetzungen, aber Knochenreste habe ich nicht mehr beobachtet*”), a remark that further supports the idea that he was not present when the tomb was emptied.

Herzfeld stated that the tomb was situated along the “old” road, which is still in use for traffic going from Khorramabad to Kuh-i Dasht, to the West. He placed Gilviran at approx. 4 to 5 km from Khorramabad. Due to the expansion of the city it is now much closer to the western part but it is ca. 5 km in a straight line from the dominant Falak-o Aflak castle in the centre of town (Pl. 1). On Google Earth the grave can be plotted at 33°27'47.93” N and 48°18'06.77” E. The tomb is located on the lower slopes of Yafteh Mountain, in the prolongation of Kuh-i Sefid, some 3.6 km to the NNE of Khorramabad airport. The grave can now be seen in a steep bank at some two meters above the present day level of the road. The site is locally referred to as “Sarab-i Nilufar” (information provided by Mirath-i Ferhengi, Khorramabad), which is to be translated as “Spring of the water-lily”. Nenuphars or water-lilies have always been abundant in this area as appears from Jacques de Morgan’s travel journal: “*Enfin, le lendemain tout étant prêt, ma caravane s’ébranlait vers dix heures du matin, sortait de la ville (de Khorramabad) et s’allongeait en un long ruban entre Tâfta-Kouh, montagne abrupte d’une grande hauteur et les ruisseaux remplis de nénuphars...*” (Jaunay 1997: 444). There are no other Bronze Age remains visible in the immediate vicinity but there is a circular tepe (base approx. 120 m in diam.) some 2.4 km to the ESE (Pl. 1; 7). The mound was recorded by Claire Goff who identified it as a site with a Giyan IV-II occupation (Goff 1971: 147, fig. 8).

The Gilviran tomb is of the “pitched roof type”, basically a corridor shaped tomb built with large stones and covered with pitched capstones. When Herzfeld saw it in 1928, it was still completely preserved. His sketch shows that only the tip of the roof was exposed (Fig. 1, Pl. 9) and the tomb must have been entered from that point possibly by removing one or two stones from the upper short side. The drawing shows that only two stones remained on the short side, on the same level as the vertical side walls. The

side walls were each made of 8 large upright standing stone slabs. At what was considered to be the rear end of the tomb he observed no stones. This was confirmed during our visit and one could wonder whether this side may have been the original entrance. Eventual stones at that side may of course also have been removed at some later stage, e.g. when an additional inhumation took place. It can not be excluded that the tomb is in fact longer and that the rear part of it remained unexcavated.

When seen by Herzfeld the total length was 17 feet (approx. 5.20 m), with a width between four and five feet (approx. 1.20 to 1.50 m) and a height of 5 to 6 feet (approx. 1.50 to 1.80 m). By the time we visited the site in 2003, 75 years after Herzfeld, half of the tomb-structure had disappeared. The road was widened and the adjoining slope cut away, effectively removing the front half of the tomb. Only four of the eighth wall-stones of the sides are still preserved, but the roof of this half with some smaller filling stones remains intact. It is not excluded that more tombs are to be found on this mountain slope since usually such large Early Bronze Age tombs appear in clusters (see e.g. Bani Surmah and Kalleh Nisar in Pusht-i Kuh: Haerinck & Overlaet 2006 & 2008). Tombs with pitched roofs are mainly to be found to the East of the Kabir Kuh (e.g. Mir Khair & Dar Tanha in Pusht-i Kuh), but mainly in the Pish-i Kuh, south of Khorramabad (e.g. Tepe Jarali, Kamtarlan, Mir Vali, Gar Zore, see Goff 1971: 146; Thrane 1965: 165-167, fig. 10, 12-13; Vanden Berghe 1979: 42-44; Schmidt, Van Loon & Curvers 1989: Pl. 8, 13, 19, 24; Haerinck 2011: Pl. 17). Similar tombs of mid 2nd millennium date are also to be found at e.g. Lama Cemetery, near Yasuy, in Kohgilouye va Boyerahmad, further South in the Zagros (Rezvani, Roustaei, Azadi & Ghezelbash 2007: fig. 18, 25, 31, 35; Pl. 57, 61, 63, 64, 71, 80).

Up to now, little was known about the burial goods from Gilviran. Herzfeld only published photographs of the two bronze vessels and a comment on the other burial goods from the Gilviran tomb. In the following survey of respectively the pottery, the stone and the metal artefacts his comments are linked to his original drawings and notes.

Pottery

Herzfeld's report (1929/30: 70) stated that there were 15 large jars of which he recovered only two. Furthermore there were an unknown number of smaller vessels (supposed to have contained grain) of which he recovered

four. The remainder had all disappeared. He continues to describe the pottery as being of various shapes and techniques: there were monochrome and bichrome vessels and pottery with “a relief decoration that he had not observed in the region of Nehavand”. Herzfeld also mentions a jug (*infra* Cer. 2) that was “fully identical” to one from Susa II.

In his notes Herzfeld documented these 6 pottery vessels and photos of three of them were present in his files. Most of the drawings are only sketches with a very short description and sometimes with an indication of measurements.

Cer. 1. (Pl. 10, 18). Deep unpainted bowl with incised lines (no measurements given but note the scale on Pl. 18). It can be compared to a vessel from Qabr Nahi tomb 3 n° 21 (Abdanan region, Pusht-i Kuh: unpublished: Haerinck & Overlaet forthcoming: Pl. 73 n° 21), a large communal tomb attributed to Early Dynastic II and III(A). It contained polychrome and monochrome wares (for the types see Haerinck 2011: Pl. 5 & 6, 12), as well as sherds and bases with rope decorations. The latter type of vessels can be compared to Susa Ville Royale I (Carter 1980: 63, fig. 16-7, level 14; 81-84, figs. 25-27, levels 12 to 9), as well as to Godin III:6 pottery (Henrickson 1987: 44, 91, fig. 9 n° 2).

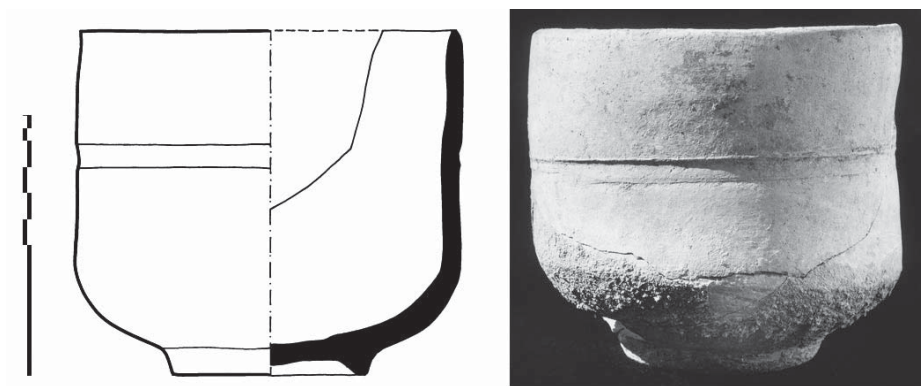


Fig. 2. Unpainted vessel from Qabr Nahi tomb 3 n° 21 (Abdanan region).

Cer. 2. (Pl. 10). Painted jar with tubular spout, which Herzfeld describes as handmade (no dimensions given). This monochrome painted vessel is perfectly comparable to Godin III:6 pottery, that can broadly be dated to Early Dynastic IIIA (Henrickson 1987: fig. 4-8; Haerinck 2011: 73-78).

Herzfeld stated the vessel was identical to one from Susa II (here fig. 3; Pottier 1912: Pl. XXV, 7.) A second one from Susa was discovered in a tomb together with a bronze axe, mirror and dressing case (de Mecquenem 1943: Tomb 319, p. 103, fig. 72:26). Another similar spouted vessel was excavated at Mirvali in Rumishgan (fig. 3; Schmidt, van Loon & Curvers 1989: Pl. 86b-c; Haerinck 2011: Pl. 13 n° 8).



Fig. 3. Vessels from Susa (left; after Pottier 1912: Pl. XXV, 7) and Mirvali (right; after Schmidt, van Loon & Curvers 1989: Pl. 86b-c) comparable to Cer. 2 from Gilviran (not to scale).

Cer. 3. (Pl. 10). Jar with carinated shoulder and rounded base, painted red and black (no dimensions given). The vessel may be comparable to vessels from Susa Db (Le Breton 1957: fig. 35), Mirvali (Tomb 4, MV 29; Schmidt, van Loon & Curvers 1989: Pl. 81-1), Kish (Y-Friedhof/Wagengrab III, see Müller-Karpe 1993: Taf. 147: 2nd object left on bottom row) or Ahmad al-Hattu (Eickhoff 1993: Abb. 39 n° 39-46). The type was seemingly long living.

Cer. 4-5. (Pl. 11, 16, 17). Large unpainted jars with vertical ribs as decorations on the shoulder; a double ridge on transition from neck to shoulder; a single ridge on transition from neck to body (H. 42 cm / 43.5 cm). The shape is comparable to the so called “Mussian” painted vessels from the Deh Luran-Abdanan-Rumishgan area, which were produced for several centuries in the first half of the 3rd millennium (Haerinck 2011: 63-66, Pl. 5:5,7,8; Pl. 6-7, Pl. 9:1). Lime deposit on some of the vessels might hide painted decoration. As already said, E. Herzfeld stated that this type of vessel was not recovered in the region of Nehavand. Seemingly, this type of decoration (for a discussion on the type of rib-decoration:

see Haerinck 2011: 63-66, Pl. 5-9) is mainly to be found between Deh Luran & Abadan and in the Pish-i Kuh, up to the area of Khorramabad. This coincides largely with the distribution of the pitched roof type of burial (however, the tombs in the Abadan region have a flat roof).

Cer. 6. (Pl. 12, 18). Another unpainted jar has a ridge on the transition from neck to shoulder and a carination at the transition from shoulder to body. H. 37 cm (at Susa: Gautier & Lampre 1905: Pl. VII; Carter 1987: 77, fig. 2; compare also to painted vessels at Mirvali: Schmidt, van Loon & Curvers 1989: Pl. 90; and Godin Tepe: Henrickson 1987: fig. 8 / Haerinck 2011: Pl. 13 n° 7 = Godin III:6; and also to Pusht-i Qaleh Abadan: Haerinck 2011: Pl. 6 n° 1),

Stone Artefacts

Stone 1. Alabaster vessels (Pl. 16).

Herzfeld mentions to have seen “*drei flache kleine Alabasterschalen urtümlicher Form und Technik die verschwunden sind*”, three small low bowls of alabaster (Herzfeld 1929/30: 70). He was not able to retrieve them but he did make a sketch of one of them (Pl. 16). It is a very simple low bowl with a flat base, a diameter of approx. 9 cm and a height of 4 cm.

Stone 2. Agate beads (Pl. 16).

On Pl. 16 there are sketches of two agate beads, unfortunately without measurements, which Herzfeld described as “... *einige schöne grosse Achat-Platten und doppelkonische Perlen, wie in Nihawand und wie die grossen Lapis-Perlen der Königliche Gräber von Ur*” (Herzfeld 1929/30: 70). What Herzfeld called “large agate plates” are flat beads; the longitudinal perforation is clearly indicated on the drawing. Similar beads are present at numerous Early Bronze Age sites. Several such beads were discovered at Susa, including in tomb A322, in association with one of the wagons that can be dated to Early Dynastic IIIB (de Mecquenem 1943: 103, fig. 84:6; Tallon 1987: vol. I, 297, Vol. II, 114-115, 315, 317, nr. 1164 and 1172). Others were excavated at Shahdad’s cemetery A, dating from the second half of the 3rd millennium (Hakemi 1997, 328, 655, nrs. Ha.17 and 18). The second sketch shows what seems to be half of a large biconical or rounded bead.

Large agate biconical or rounded beads are common finds in tombs of Iran and Mesopotamia, particularly during the Early Dynastic II/III and Akkadian periods. They have been found in Luristan Bronze Age tombs at Nurabad (1 bead; Sajjadi & Samani 1999: Pl. 22:4), Kalleh Nisar (4 beads; Haerinck & Overlaet 2008: 52-57, fig. 27B, Pl. 72), Bani Surmah (1 bead; Haerinck & Overlaet 2006: 55-60, fig. 29B, Pl. 72) and Takht-i Khan Tomb 2 n° 29 (Haerinck & Overlaet forthcoming).

Metal Artefacts

Herzfeld mentions bronze (or more accurately copper alloy) spearheads, arrowheads, gauges and chisels, an axe head and two spouted vessels. He was able to acquire both vessels and these are the only metal artefacts that were documented in more detail and with photographs. Both vessels are currently in the British Museum.

Met. 1-3. bronze spearheads and arrowheads (Pl. 16).

The notes on the drawings identify them as a “spear” (Lanze), a “javelin” (Wurfspeer) and an “arrow” (Pfeil), identifications apparently based on their size. There are, however, no exact measurements indicated. Blades that could be used for daggers, spears or javelins are very common in the Early Bronze Age tombs in the Pusht-i Kuh but they generally have perforations in the tang for rivets (Haerinck & Overlaet 2006: 30-33, fig. 13-14; 2008: 33-35, fig. 14; 2010: 19-20, 128-132, fig. 9, fig. 33-35). Since Herzfeld only made a rough sketch of the uncleaned objects, it is now impossible to ascertain the presence or absence of rivet perforations. It remains tentative to go beyond the general observation that tanged blades were a common feature in the Early Bronze Age tombs in Luristan. This is, however, not the case for the arrowhead, a type of object that is not attested in any of the EBA tombs from the Pusht-i Kuh. They are, however, occasionally found in Middle Bronze Age tombs, e.g. at Nurabad (Sajjadi & Samani 1999: Pl. 17) and Tepe Guran (Thrane 2001: Pl. 9) and are very common in the Early Iron Age tombs (Overlaet 2003: 172-179, fig. 140-145, 184). The presence of an arrowhead may be an indication for a later re-use of the tomb, assuming the item was indeed part of the tomb's content. Since Herzfeld was apparently shown a number of the objects as from the tomb — without actually witnessing their unearthing — one must remain prudent on this point.



Fig. 4. Axe heads from Gilviran (left — see Pl. 16) and from “Luristan” (Royal Museums of Art and History, Brussels, inv. IR.148; photo© RMAH, Brussels), not to scale.

Met. 4. Bronze axe head (fig. 4; Pl. 16).

The copper alloy axe head is of an unusual type. The short socket has strengthening mouldings at its top and bottom and is positioned below the upper edge of the blade. The blade itself is straight and keeps the same height to the nearly vertical cutting edge. There is no direct parallel for this type of axe head but it can be compared to a group of axe heads with sockets that are cut away at both top and bottom and with a protuberance on the butt because of the positioning of its blade versus the socket (Fig. 4 right). Some of these axe heads are lavishly decorated with lions on the blade or socket and the blade is sometimes slightly tilted downwards. A plain specimen was discovered at Susa (Tallon 1987, vol. I, 93 sous-type C1, vol. II, 148 nr. 68) and several others are claimed to come from Luristan. The group can be dated to the late third millennium and early second millennium (Calmeyer 1969: 39-41, Abb. 40-42; Muscarella 1988: 388-389, nr. 514). The Gilviran axe head with its plain socket and horizontal blade is of a much simpler, less developed shape, however. It is likely to predate the group and a mid third millennium date could be tentatively ascribed to it.

Met. 5. Bronze gouges and chisels (fig. 5; Pl. 16).

Herzfeld mentions in his report bronze “Bohrer und Meissel”, what would have to be translated as “drills and chisels”. However, from his sketch it appears that his “Bohrer” are in fact gouges or wood chisels. His “Meissel” or chisels are not illustrated but are most likely to be chisels with a straight cutting edge, in contrast with the rounded cutting edge of

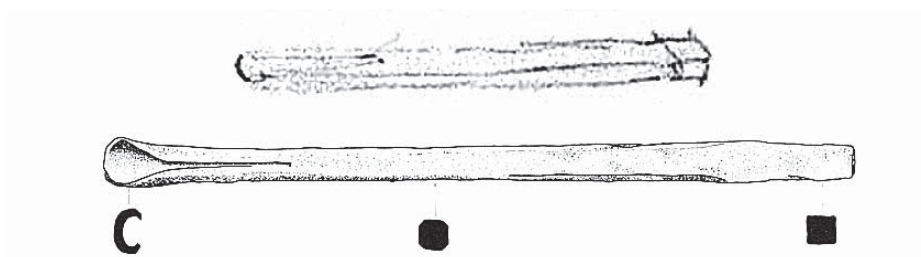


Fig. 5. Gouge from Gilviran (top, sketch by E. Herzfeld, see Pl. 16) and Susa (after Tallon 1987: vol. II, 225 nr 519), not to scale.

the gouge. There are two main groups of chisels, those with a flat/rectangular and those with a square cross-section. Again it is impossible to know which type Herzfeld saw but both types are well documented in Early Bronze Age I-III tombs of the Pusht-i Kuh region in Luristan, i.e. tombs dating from the early and mid third millennium. They were discovered at Mir Khair, Dar Tanha, Cheshmeh Takht-i Khan, Mehr War Kabud and Bani Surmah, often in combination with a bronze saw (Vanden Berghe 1979: 28-30, fig. 18, Pl. XIa; Haerinck & Overlaet 2006: 32-35, fig. 15, Pl. 11, 13, 41; 2010: 22-23, fig. 10, Pl. 2-3, 23, VIII). Most of the Luristan tombs were disturbed but in Bani Surmah tomb A2 there was a set of six bronze chisels and a saw that compared to a gold set from the “royal” tomb of Pu-Abi in Ur (Woolley 1934: 81, 309, 556, Pl. 158) and to a bronze set from Tell Gubba (Fujii 1981: fig. 23, Pl. 14). It is thus not surprising that Herzfeld spoke in plural and several chisels and gouges must have been among the burial goods.

Herzfeld's drawing of the gouge is fairly detailed, although measurements are lacking. The hollowed-out tip is about $\frac{1}{3}^{\text{rd}}$ to $\frac{1}{4}^{\text{th}}$ of the total length and a small part at the back where the handle fitted on is delineated. Whereas chisels are well documented, gouges seem to be much more rare in these sets of utensils. A gouge was found in an Early Dynastic/Akkadian grave at Tell Khazne in Jordan (Munchaev, Merpert & Bader 1990: 12, fig. 4); another found at Susa was published by de Mecquenem as from the Ur III level of the Donjon, possibly also from a tomb (de Mecquenem 1934: 232, fig. 81:2; Tallon 1987: vol. I, 171). Several others were

discovered at Susa but for these a more exact provenance is unknown (Tallon 1987: vol. I, 170-171, vol. II, 53, 225, nr. 515-521). At other sites gouges were found in various hoards or deposits, e.g. at Byblos, Tell Taya, Ur and Tell Brak (for extensive references see McDonald, Curtis & Maxwell-Hyslop 2001: 239, 568-569, Fig. 252).

Met. 6-7. Bronze spouted vessels

Herzfeld acquired the two copper alloy vessels from the tomb and sold them in 1936 as part of a large collection of antiquities to the British Museum. He reproduced photographs in his original report and later in his general book on Iran (Herzfeld 1929/30: 70-71, Taf. VI-VII; 1941: 114, fig. 226, Pl. XXV).

Spouted vase with globular body (fig. 6; Pl. 12-13, 15 & 19).

British Museum Inv. BM.128804 (1936,0613.199)

Height 12.5 cm (without spout) / Diam. rim 12.5 cm / Diam. base 4 cm.

Hammered sheet metal; engraved decoration

Bibl.: Herzfeld 1929/30: 70-71, Taf. VII; 1941: 114, fig. 226 / Calmeyer 1969: 14-15, Abb. 13 / Bellelli 2002: 119, Tav. 28 nr. 160.

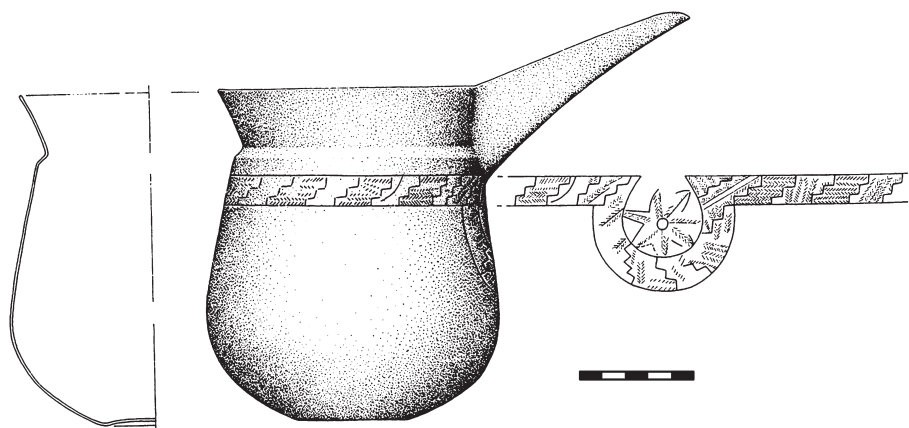


Fig. 6. Spouted vase with globular body from Gilviran (after Bellelli 2002: Tav. 28, nr. 160 - a pair of lightly engraved concentric lines around the base, mentioned on the BM collection database website, is not indicated on the drawing).

Spouted vase with cylindrical body (fig. 7, Pl. 13, 14 & 20).

British Museum Inv. BM.128600 (1936,0613.200)

Height 13.5 cm (without spout) / Diam. rim 9.3 cm / Diam. base 8.8 cm.

Hammered sheet metal; repoussé with engraved and punched decoration

Bibl.: Herzfeld 1929/30: 70-71, Taf. VI; 1941: 114, Pl. XXV-7 / Calmeyer 1969: 14-15, Abb. 10 / Moorey 1974: Pl. XIX / Bellelli 2002: 15-16, 120, Tav. 28 nr. 161.

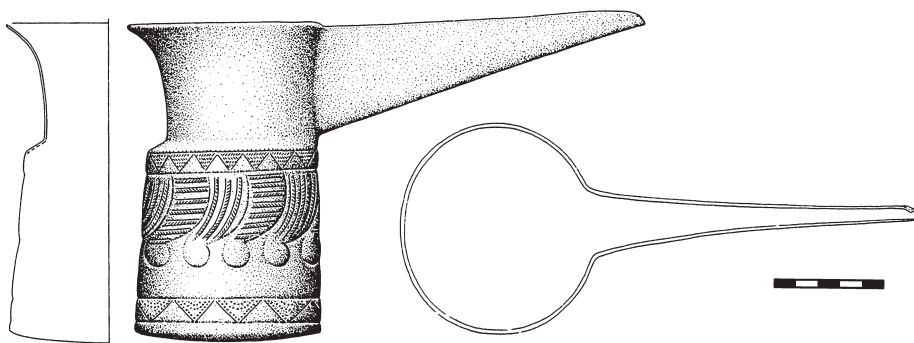


Fig. 7. Spouted vase with cylindrical body from Gilviran
(after Bellelli 2002: Tav. 28, nr. 161).

Peter Calmeyer discussed both vases in his “*Datierbare Bronzen aus Luristan und Kirmanshah*” in which he tried to date the many unprovenanced Luristan bronzes using excavated comparisons. He assembled a series of 11 such vessels, 5 strays and 6 “excavated” and called them “*Schnabeltöpfe vom Typ Gilviran*” (Calmeyer 1969: 14-17, Abb. 10-14). He distinguished two subgroups, represented by the two specimens from Gilviran.

The spouted vases with globular body and a concave rim are well attested at Susa throughout the Early Dynastic periods. Their analysis confirmed that body and spout were hammered from a single copper alloy sheet (Tallon 1987: vol. I, 216, variante E3b, vol. II, 280, nr. 780-783). A parallel from Ur can be dated to the Early Dynastic III period (tomb PG.560: Müller-Karpe 1993: 27, Taf. 8 nr. 38 “variante 3IIa”). The Gilviran vessel is the only one of this sub-type which bears a more extensive decoration beyond simple horizontal lines.

The spouted vase with its cylindrical body is with four specimens well attested at Susa in an Early Dynastic III context (Tallon 1987: vol. I, 216-218, fig. 24). One of them is decorated with hammered and engraved pending tufts (fig. 8; de Mecquenem 1924: 114, fig. 8; Amiet 1966: 208, fig. 154; Tallon 1987: vol. I, 217, fig. 24). Other “Luristan” vessels with this decoration are present in various collections (Calmeyer 1969: 14-15, nr. 5E, Abb. 11). Undecorated specimens were discovered in tombs from the A-cemetery at Shahdad, dating from the second half of the third

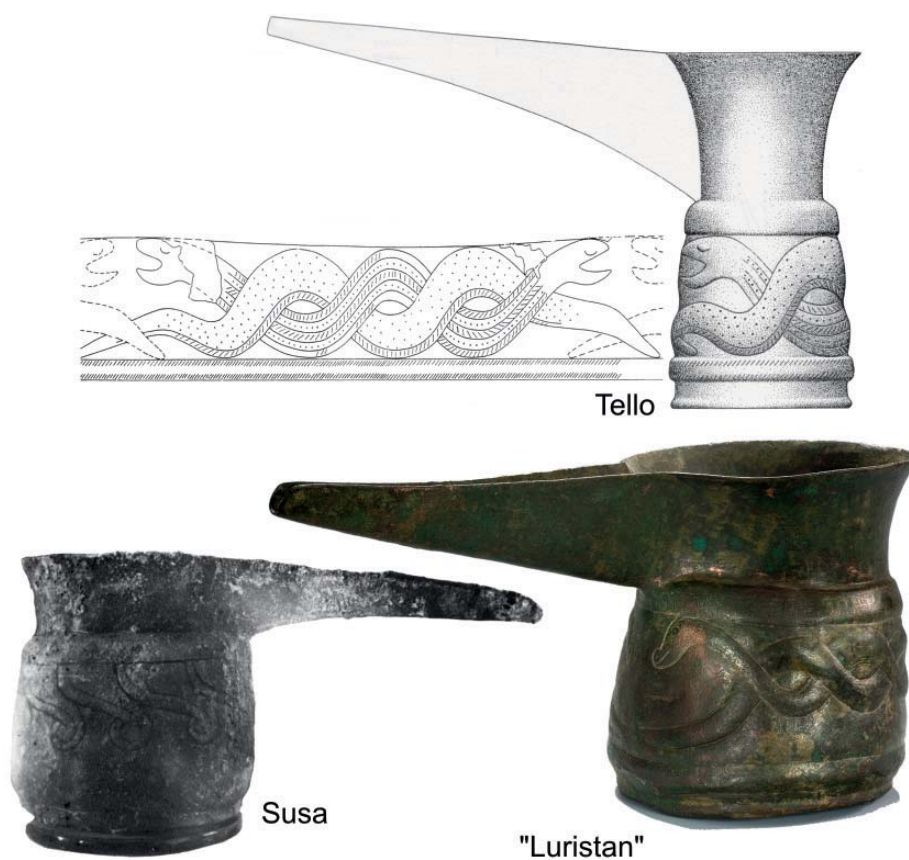


Fig. 8. Decorated spouted vases with cylindrical bodies from Tello (after Müller-Karpe 1993: Taf. 8-9), Susa (after Tallon 1987: fig. 24) and “Luristan” (acquired in 1939 by the Royal Museums of Art and History, Brussels, inv. IR.288, ©KMG-MRAH, Brussels).

millennium (Hakemi 1997: 630-631, Group Gf). Others are said to come from Bactria (Amiet 1986: 313, ill. 161). Several unprovenanced vessels claimed to come from Luristan bear “snakes” on the side (fig. 8; Calmeyer 1969: 14-15, nr. 5C-D-F, Abb. 12; Gubel & Overlaet, ed., 2007: 122-123, nr. 142). Peculiar with these vessels and probably indicating a unique workshop, is the strange phenomenon that the “intertwined and confronted snakes” are in fact a “snake” with two heads intertwined with a headless “snake” with two tails. One such vessel was excavated at Tello (fig. 8) (for extensive references see Müller-Karpe 1993: 28, Taf. 8-9 nr. 39 “variante 3IIb”).

Conclusion

Herzfeld's presence at the excavation of the Early Bronze Age tomb at Gilviran remains problematic. His notes and sketches suggest that he not really witnessed the discovery. It seems most likely that he arrived at the site shortly after the tomb's discovery, at the earliest during but most probably after the actual excavation. He was shown a selection of the burial goods, was able to acquire some of these and only had time to summarily sketch a few others. His information on the Gilviran tomb is thus certainly not complete but nevertheless, he presents a group of objects that — with the exception of a single arrowhead — fit well into the pattern we are familiar with from other Early Bronze Age tombs in Luristan. Proposing a date for the Gilviran tomb and the burial goods remains difficult. Such tombs were communal and were often used during many centuries, some of the Pusht-i Kuh tombs were even occasionally re-used after more than a millennium. With every re-use, objects could be displaced, burial goods could be mingled or items could simply be removed from the tomb and discarded. Without a precise plan of the finds in the tomb — something which is lacking — it is impossible to link individual objects to one another. The experience with the Pusht-i Kuh tombs demonstrated that even then it is only rarely possible to reconstruct individual interments within these Bronze Age communal tombs. Still, some general observations on Gilviran are possible. The pitched tomb type as well as the ribbing on some of the jars is characteristic for the area of the eastern Pusht-i Kuh and the Pish-i Kuh, up to the region of Khorramabad. The construction as well as most of the burial goods suggests that the tomb — and at least some of the interments — must be dated between 2700 and 2400 BC.

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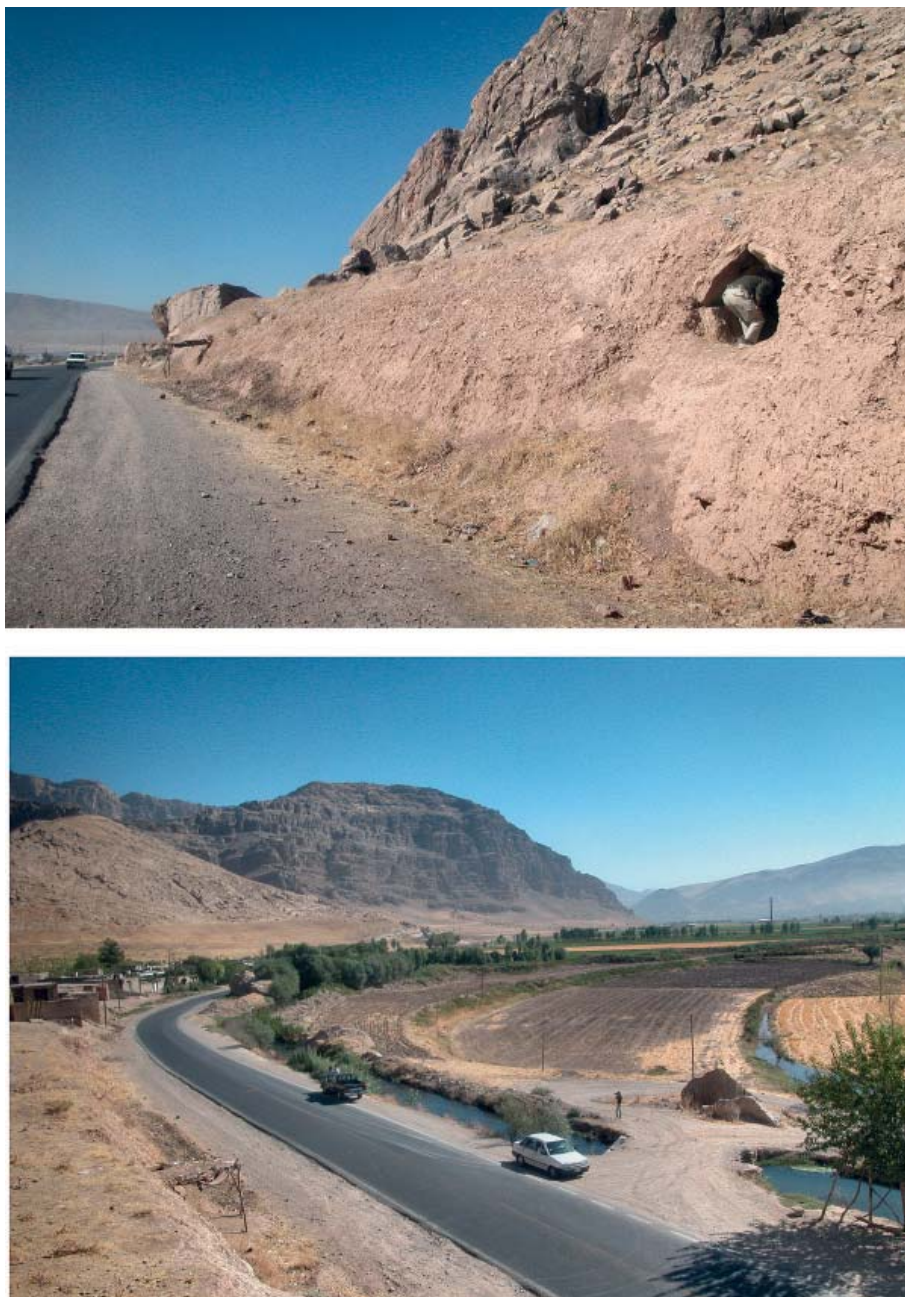
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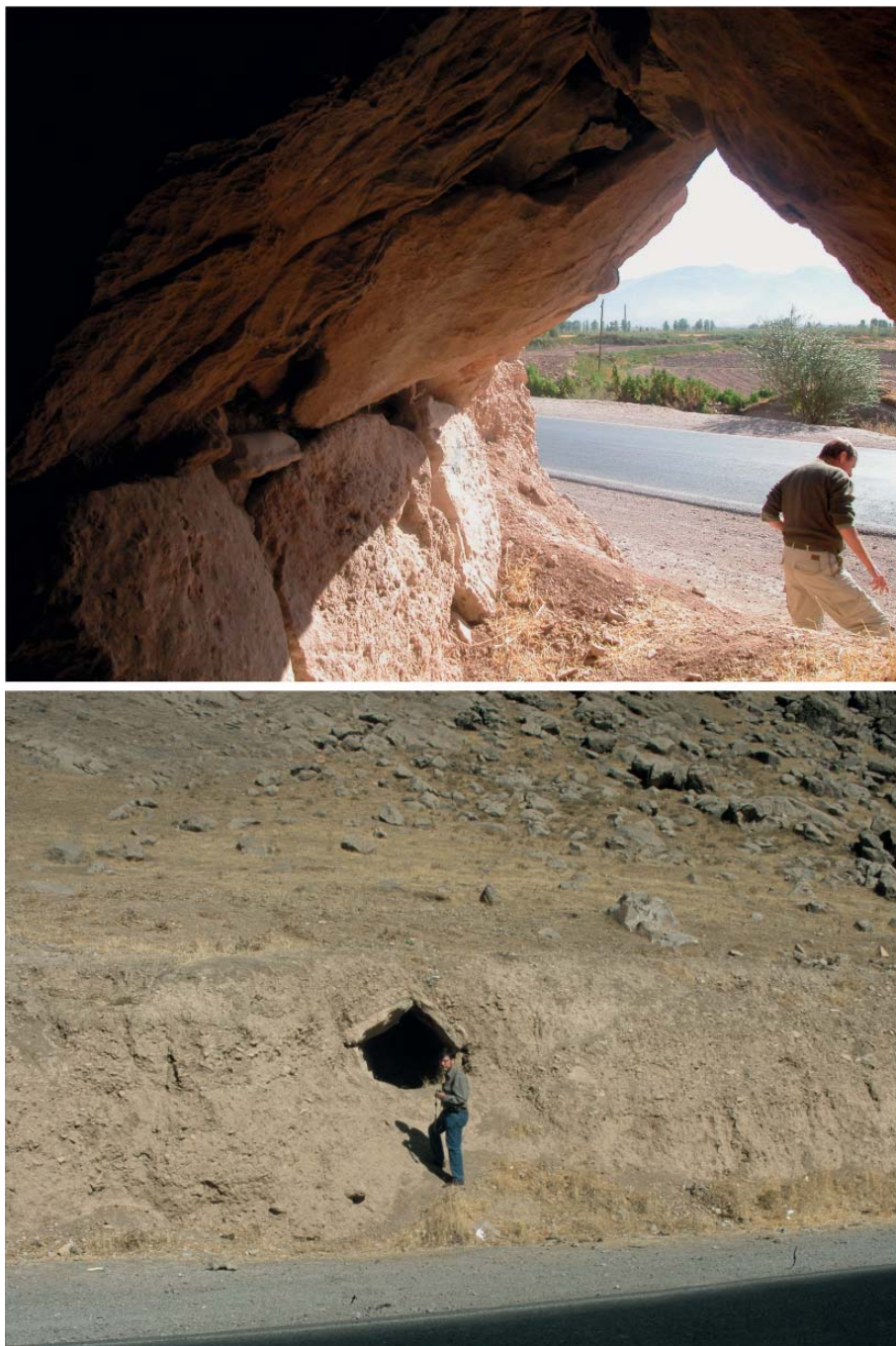
Pl. 1. Top: Google Earth view of the Khorramabad area with the location of the Gilvian tomb, a tepe and Falak-o Aflak castle in the centre of town. Bottom: detail with the location of the Gilvian tomb.



Pl. 2. The steep bank next to the road to Khorramabad with the remaining half of the Gilviran tomb. (photo by the authors Sept. 2003).



Pl. 3. Top: The steep bank next to the road to Khorramabad with the remaining half of the Gilviran tomb.
Bottom: view towards Khorramabad from the slope above the tomb.
(photo by the authors Sept. 2003).



Pl. 4. The authors at the remaining half of the Gilviran tomb.
(photo by the authors Sept. 2003).



Pl. 5. The remaining half of the Gilviran tomb.
(photo by the authors Sept. 2003).



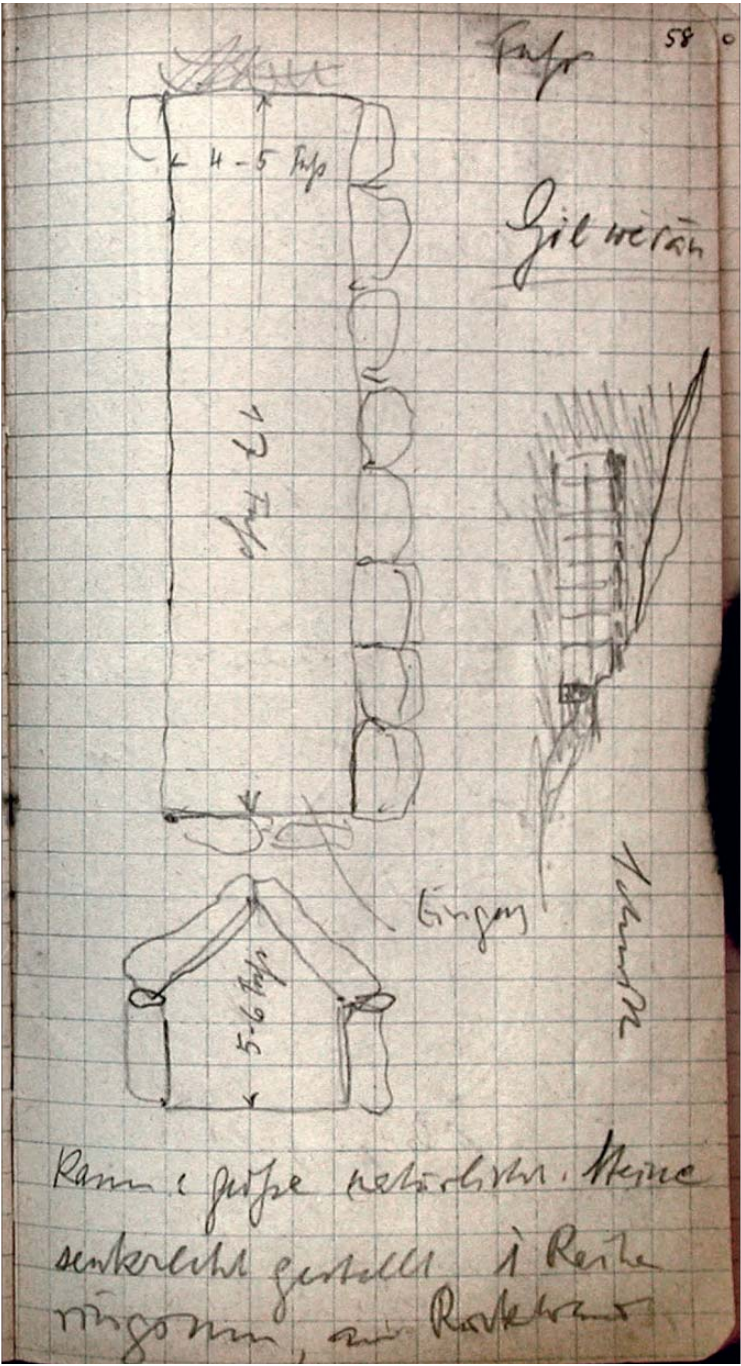
Pl. 6. View inside the Gilviran tomb.
(photo by the authors Sept. 2003).



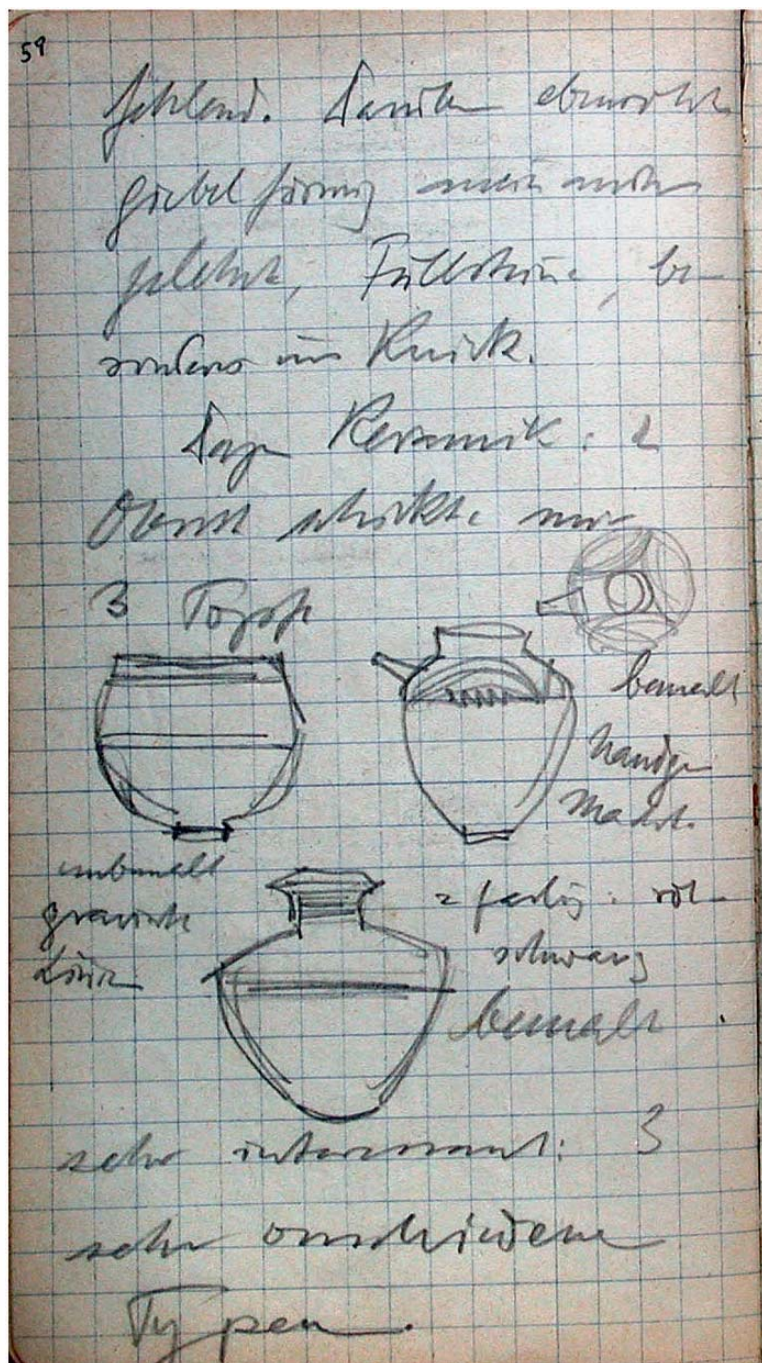
Pl. 7. The Giyan IV-III tepe near Khorramabad.
Top: view towards the tepe from the slope above the Gilviran tomb
(photo by the authors Sept. 2003).
Bottom: Google Earth view of the tepe.

57
 16. Nov 200 390
 7⁰⁰ ab Pul: Zäl
 9³⁰ Pul: durentar
 11⁴⁵ Pul: Kallmar
 1³⁵ an Khorramabad
 Am. Ritz mit Jent u.
 Oberst Mchizgulsha
 ... 4 Lrk. Tolwahn
 nach Gilwerau, ca
 4-5 km an Khorramabad
 am alten Weg, wo Fluss
 v. Fels u. 2. Hauptgang
 nahe Ritz. Keine
 Lage, Grab, Grabstein
 offen stehen
 17 x 4-5 Fuß,
 Höhe des Mauer oben 17m

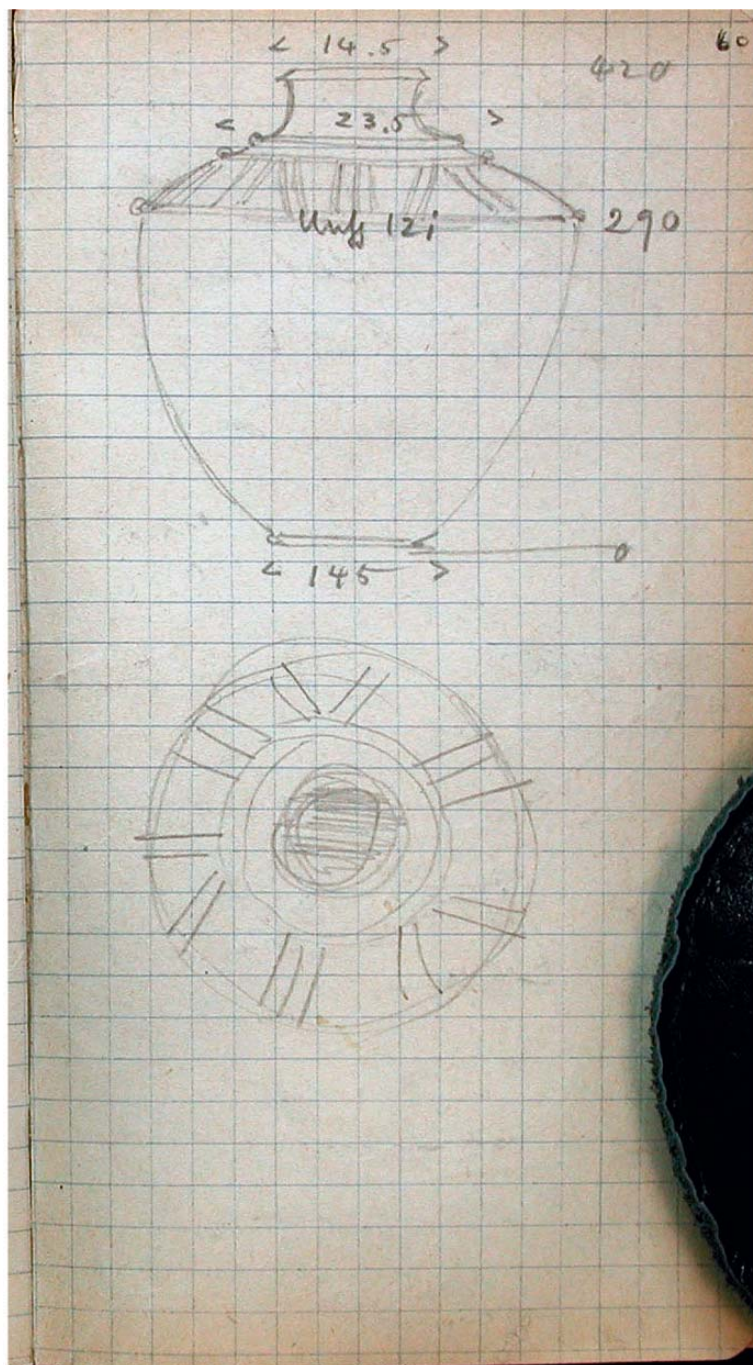
Pl. 8. Herzfeld's notes on the arrival at Khorramabad and the discovery of the tomb.
 (Travel Journal N-47 page 57 ©Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery
 Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.).



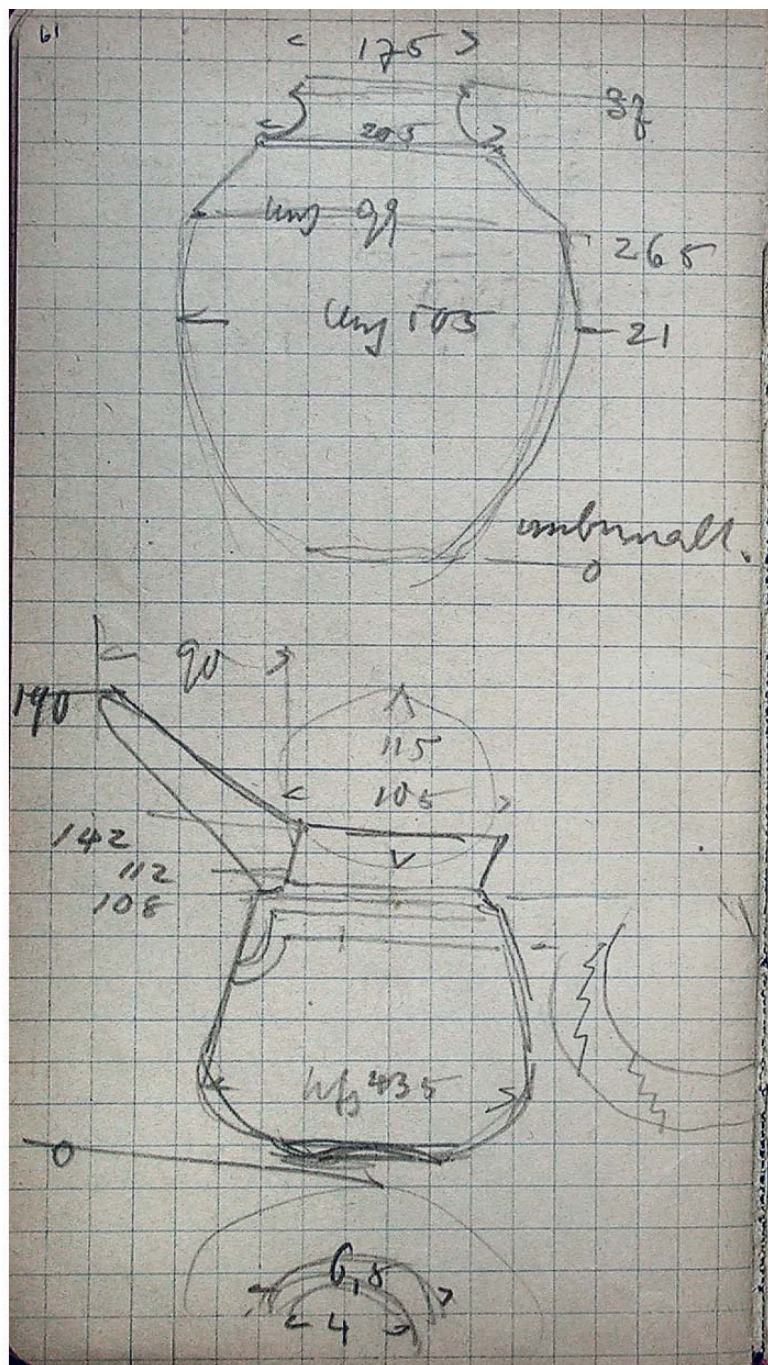
Pl. 9. Herzfeld's sketch of the Gilviran tomb.
(Travel Journal N-47 page 58 ©Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler
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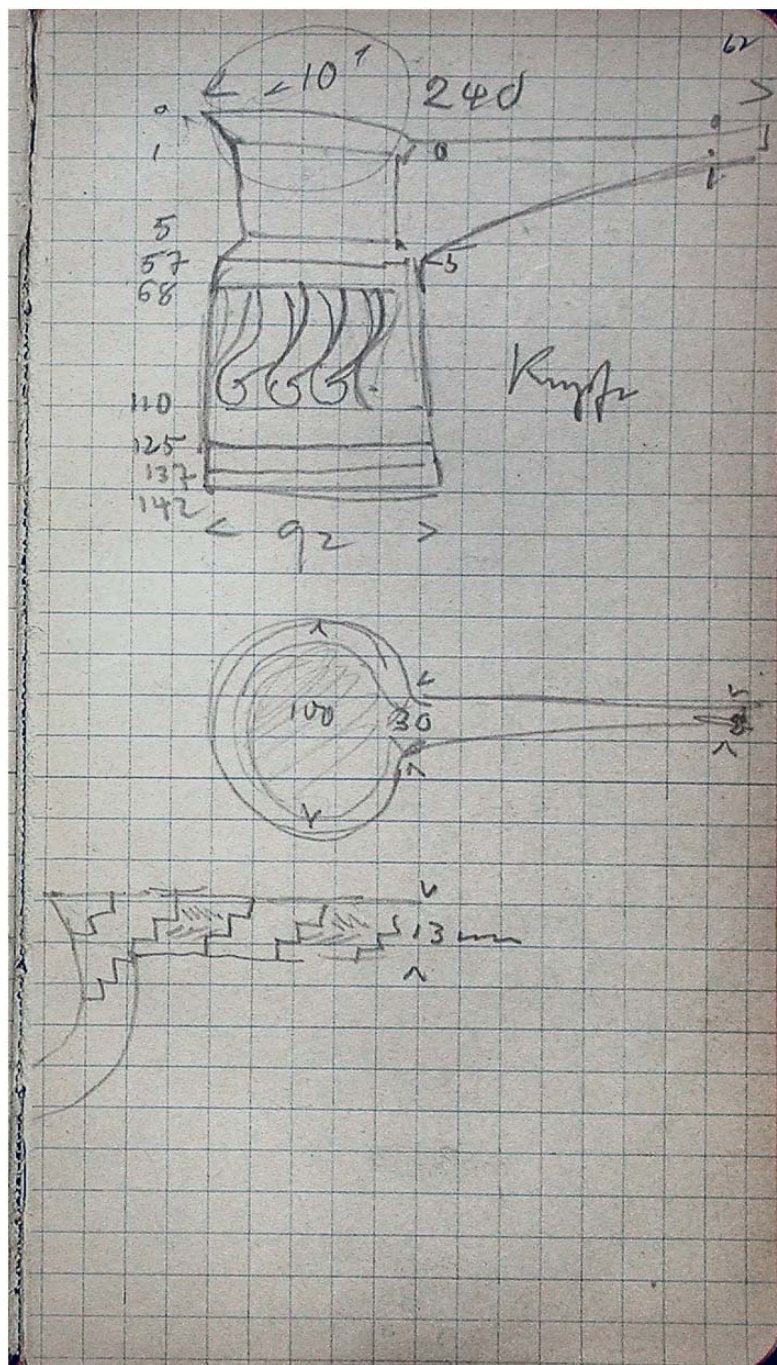
Pl. 10. Herzfeld's notes and sketches of pottery from the Gilviran tomb.
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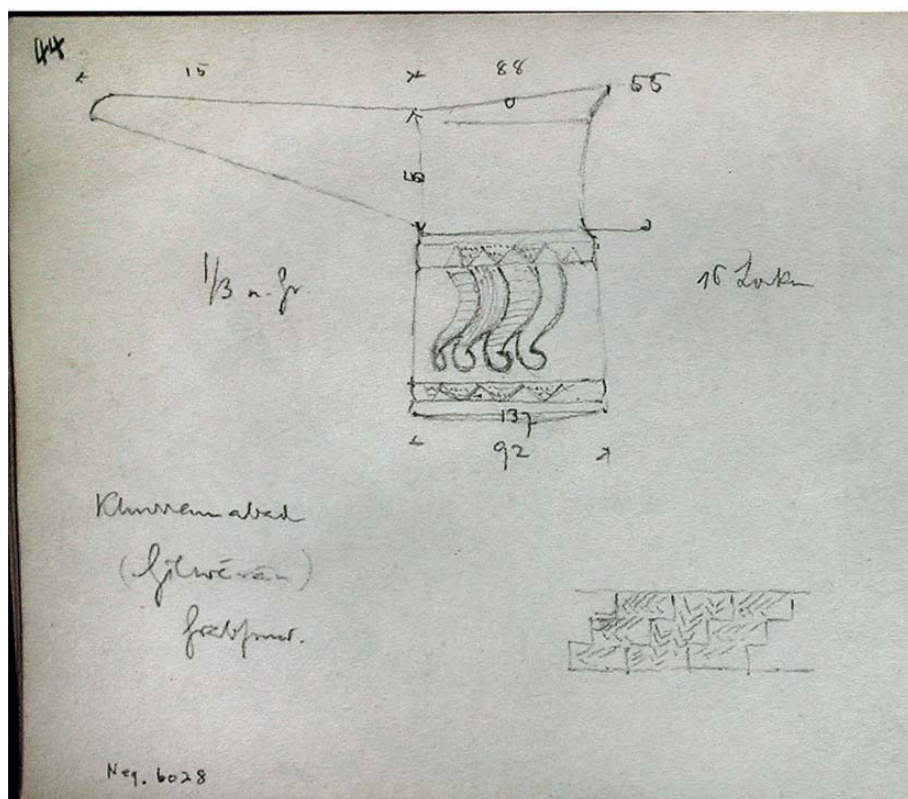
Pl. 11. Herzfeld's sketch of a vessel from the Gilviran tomb.
 (Travel Journal N-47 page 60 ©Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler
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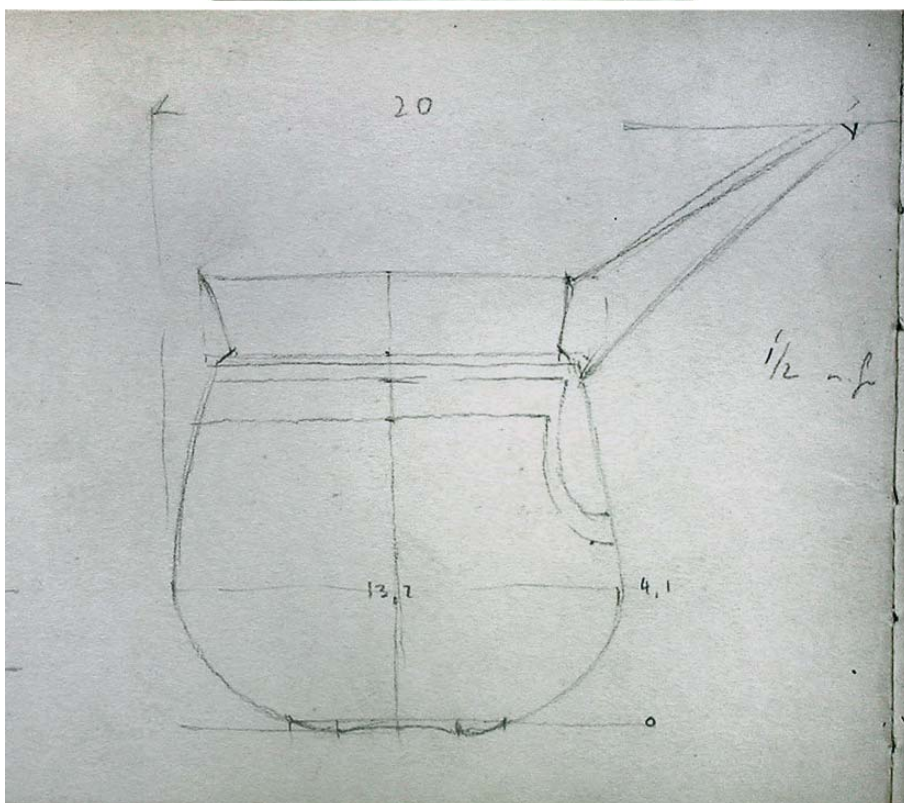
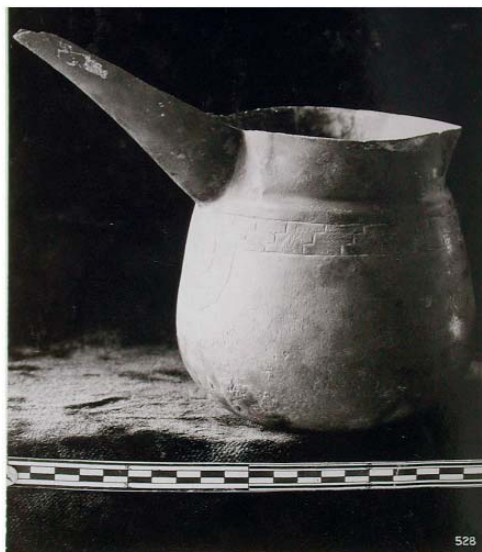
Pl. 12. Herzfeld's sketches of a pottery vessel and a bronze vase from the Gilviran tomb. The drawing of the decoration of the vase continues on the next plate (Travel Journal N-47 page 61 ©Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.).



Pl. 13. Herzfeld's sketches of a bronze vase from the Gilviran tomb.
 (Travel Journal N-47 page 62 ©Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler
 Gallery Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.).



Pl. 14. Herzfeld's photograph and sketch of a bronze vase from the Gilviran tomb.
(Sketchbook – SK-XI Pasargadae III, 1928 page 44 and Photo File 3
"Pre-Achaemenian Objects" – Image N° 103 ©Freer Gallery of Art
and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.).



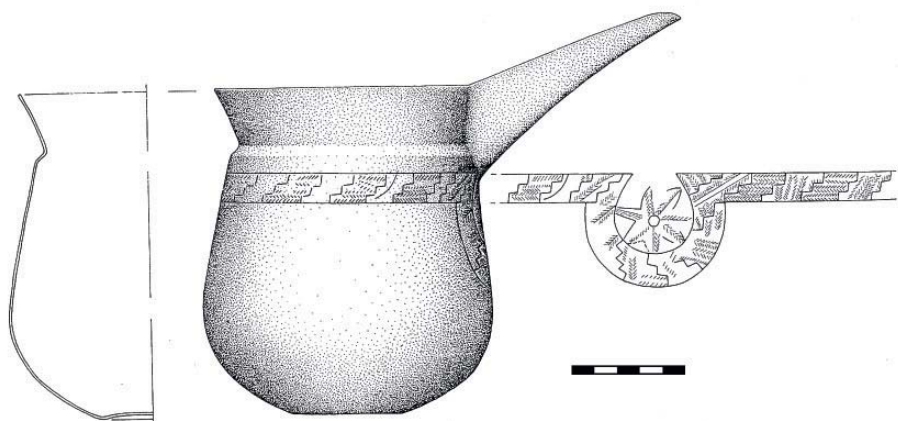
Pl. 15. Herzfeld's photograph and sketch of a bronze vase from the Gilviran tomb.
 (Sketchbook – SK-XI Pasargadae III, 1928 page 44 and Photo File 3
 “Pre-Achaemenian Objects” – Image N° 101 ©Freer Gallery of Art
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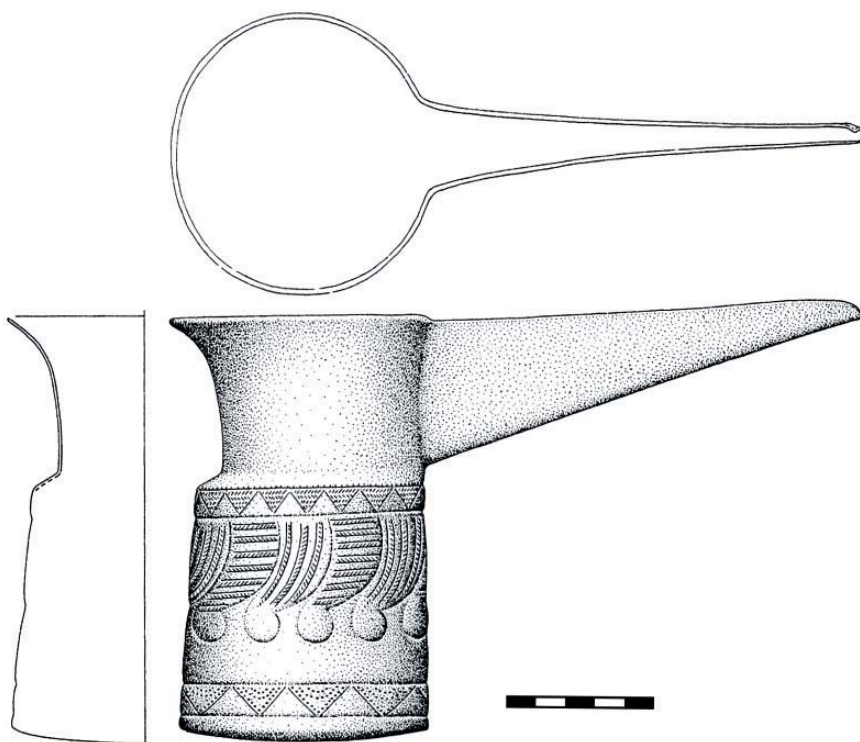
Pl. 17. Herzfeld's photograph of a pottery vessel from the Gilviran tomb.
(Photo File 3 "Pre-Achaemenian Objects" – Image N° 98 ©Freer Gallery of Art
and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.).



Pl. 18. Herzfeld's photographs of pottery vessels from the Gilviran tomb.
(Photo File 3 "Pre-Achaemenian Objects" – Image N° 99 & 100 ©Freer Gallery of Art
and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.).



Pl. 19. Spouted vase with globular body from Gilviran.
 (Photo © Trustees of the British Museum; inv. BM. 128804;
 drawing after Bellelli 2002: Tav. 28, nr. 160 - a pair of lightly engraved concentric
 lines around the base, mentioned on the BM collection database website,
 is not indicated on the drawing).



Pl. 20. Spouted vase with cylindrical body from Gilviran
(Photo © Trustees of the British Museum; inv. BM. 128600;
drawing after Bellelli 2002: Tav. 28, nr. 161).

REPORT ON SELECTED HUMAN REMAINS FROM LAMA, SOUTHERN ZAGROS, IRAN

BY

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Abstract: During two seasons of excavations (2009-2010) at the Lama cemetery, the archaeological team directed by Mohammad Javad Jafari explored 12 graves dated to the late 2nd and early 1st millennium BCE. Most of them contained multiple burials and the total minimum number of individuals is 90 according to the fieldwork documentation. From this number, remains of at least 55 individuals were studied in order to reconstruct diet, living conditions and activity of the local population, as well as trace some elements of the burial customs and post-depositional history of graves using taphonomic data. Youngest children buried at the Lama cemetery had been separated from adults, but adults of both sexes had been likely buried together. Many of the bodies decayed in the empty space and most graves were re-opened for several subsequent burials. It may be deduced from ecological context that the people buried in Lama were nomadic pastoralists and this observation is confirmed by possible high general level of terrestrial mobility, especially in males, and low intake of fermentable sugars in the diet. The environmental stress was quite high, although diet rich in animal products prevented megaloblastic anemia. No signs of violence were observed, and periodontal disease was quite common due to poor oral hygiene.

Key-words: bioarchaeology, taphonomy of human remains, diet, stress, physical activity, burial customs, southern Zagros, Lama cemetery

Introduction

Zagros Mountains is the natural barrier between Iran and Mesopotamia, known from Mesopotamian sources as the place inhabited by barbarian tribes. Not well recognised by archaeologists, this region was even more neglected by bioarchaeologists, with only several skeletons from Luristan studied so far (Vallois 1935; Soto Riesle 1983). The more valuable was the accidental discovery of a cemetery near the village Lama in the southern Zagros, which took place in 1999 during road construction work.

The cemetery is located in the Beshar valley (31°02'35"N 51°13'19"E), ~1500 masl, and surrounded by high mountain ranges, some peaks more than 4000 masl (Pl. 1a). It is located at 50 km north of Yasuj, the capital of Kuhgiluyeh va Boyer-Ahmad province. There are virtually no traces of permanent settlement in the area and the cemetery was most likely used by nomadic herders of caprovines. The cemetery was excavated thrice by different Iranian teams. After the accidental discovery in December 1999 rescue excavations were organised during nearly 6 months revealing 53 graves. Another exploration took place 6 years later and 8 more graves were unearthed. Subsequently, a final report was published (Rezvani et al. 2007). Most recently (2009-2010) Mohammad Javad Jafari from the Iranian Center for Archaeological Research explored with his team a cluster of 12 graves on the slope of a hill (Pl. 1b). The present paper discusses only human remains unearthed by this last expedition.

Most graves were carefully constructed with stones, the burial chamber being covered with a flat or gabled roof of large slabs with smaller stones to close the gaps (Pl. 2a). Some of them contained single inhumations but most were consecutively re-opened for other bodies to be entered/deposited in multiple burials. All articulated skeletons were buried with flexed legs, most on their right side, and disarticulated elements were usually heaped towards the northern part of the burial chamber, sometimes with possible more careful arrangement of selected bones. Many vessels and sherds as well as other grave goods were found and they enable the dating of the cemetery to the Kaftari-Ghale/Shogha-Teimuran period, i.e. from the end of the Late Bronze Age through Early Iron Age in late 2nd and early 1st millennium BCE (Sołtysiak et al. 2010; Jafari 2010).

Two boxes of selected human remains from graves 62-74 excavated at the Lama cemetery were transported to the Institute of Archaeology at Tehran University and there studied by the present author in August 2010. The sample was not representative, with cranial fragments and especially pieces of cranial vault much more abundant than the postcranial elements, which were present in a greater quantity only in a few contexts. Many bags contained only teeth, sometimes with fragments of maxillae or mandibulae. Due to time limitations, only bones were studied together with these teeth which were accompanied by any fragments of alveoli. Exfoliated teeth have been secured for further more detailed study and the report on them will be published elsewhere.

Environmental conditions and exposure of many skeletons to various diagenetic agents made studied human remains very eroded and fragmented (Pl. 2b). Both these factors — erosion and post-excavation selection of bones — prevented reliable conclusions in many cases. It is possible, however, that further excavations at the cemetery may bring a more representative and a larger sample of human remains, allowing more detailed insight into the living conditions of human population inhabiting the Beshar valley in the Late Bronze Age.

There are three main aims of the present report: (1) reconstruction of diet, living conditions and activity of the people buried at the Lama cemetery in general, (2) observation of possible differences between multiple burials found at the site, (3) reconstruction of burial customs and post-depositional history of graves using taphonomic data.

Material

Table 1: Human remains from the Lama cemetery; archaeological data.

Grave	MNI	Articulated	Disarticulated
62	10	1, right side, south	concentration in the northern part of the chamber
63	1	strongly damaged	—
64	1	right side	—
65	—	not a grave	—
66	1?	strongly eroded	—
67	22	none	concentration in the northern part of the chamber
68	17	none	concentration in the northern part of the chamber
69	23	none	concentration in the central part of the chamber
70	1	left side	—
71	3	1?, right side	?
72	6	none	very fragmented
73	2	strongly eroded	?
74	3	right side	crania separated, long bones arranged in parallel

Human remains from several recently excavated burials were available for the present study and the total minimum number of individuals, after the number of crania noted in archaeological documentation, is as high as 90. However, the recovery rate due to erosion and post-excavation selection is very low in case of most contexts. Short description of the skeletons buried in the particular graves is presented in Table 1. All articulated skeletons were buried with flexed legs, most on their right side, and disarticulated elements were usually heaped towards the northern part of the burial chamber, sometimes with possible more careful arrangement of selected bones.

Methods

Each bone or bone fragment was described separately with specification of the completeness, degree of erosion, taphonomical effects and osteological data. The fieldwork data sheet was based generally on the standard proposed by Buikstra and Ubelaker (1994) and included more than 90 cranial and postcranial metric measurements, more than 40 nonmetric traits, several sex and age-at-death skeletal indicators, degree of the degenerative joint disease in major joints, dental measurements and scores for enamel hypoplasia and dental caries. Also some paleopathologies — as dental abscess or antemortem tooth loss — were noted. However, due to high fragmentation and erosion only occasionally these data could have been gathered.

Most reliable sex assessment methods are based on morphological features of pelvis, as the shape of the pubic symphysis and its neighbourhood (Phenice 1969) or the greater sciatic notch (Listi & Bassett 2006). However, only a few pelvic fragments were present in the sample of human remains from Lama. For that reason, less reliable diagnostic features must have been used instead, as some metric measurements tested on Mesopotamian skeletal samples (Sołtysiak 2010a) and skull morphology, including degree of development of glabella, mastoid process, nuchal crest and mental eminence and the shape of supraorbital margins (Buikstra & Ubelaker 1994).

Age-at-death in subadult individuals was assessed by the observation of tooth development stage (AlQahtani et al. 2010). For adults the wear degree of permanent dentition was often the only available age indicator (Scott 1979; Smith 1984), as no pubic symphysis nor auricular surfaces were preserved in any individual from Lama.

Several stress markers were scored in the skeletal sample from Lama, including linear and non-linear enamel hypoplasia, cribra orbitalia and porotic hyperostosis of the cranial vault. Linear enamel hypoplasia was scored in all permanent teeth in the following scale: (0) no lines, (1) very small lines, (2) at least one distinct line, possible to palpate, (3) more than one distinct line (Schultz 1988). Position of lines on the buccal crown surface was measured as the distance to the cemento-enamel junction. Non-linear enamel hypoplasia was observed in deciduous canines (Lukacs et al. 2001) and small defects, less than 1mm in diameter, were distinguished from larger defects. Cribra orbitalia and porotic hyperostosis were scored as (0) no porosity, (1) small area of microporosity, (2) clear porosity, with holes >1mm in diameter, no hyperostosis, (3) developed porotic hyperostosis, (4) obliterated porosity, evident new bone formation (cf. Brothwell 1981).

For dental caries, a more detailed scoring system was used, with metric measurements of the carious lesion diameters and basic information about the position of the lesion (Hillson 1996). Also the presence of abscesses, advanced resorption of the alveolar process, dental calculus and antemortem tooth loss were noted in a systematic way.

Presence or absence of the degenerative joint disease was scored for all joints in which at least 50% of articular surface was preserved. Spondylosis in vertebral bodies and osteoarthritis in synovial joints were scored in the following scale: 0 – no osteoarthritis/spondylosis, 1 – small osteophyte formation and mild irregularities of the articular surface, 2 – large osteophytes, porosity and/or eburnation of the articular surface, Schmoerl nodes in case of spondylosis (Steckel et al. 2005). Also some non-pathological joint modifications, as squatting facets in tibia, and musculoskeletal stress markers were observed, although due to erosion and the small number of postcranial elements available for study these features could have been noted only for single individuals.

Results and discussion

The minimum number of individuals (MNI) represented by bones and teeth available for the present study is 55, including 20 subadult individuals. More detailed distribution of age-at-death in the sample is presented in Table 2. In case of most graves, the MNI counted after the archaeological documentation was higher which suggests that only a small part of human remains was available for osteological study; this difference is especially striking in case of graves 67 and 69. However, there are also two graves (63 and 74) where the number of individuals appeared to be higher than indicated by the archaeological data. Both of them are exceptional in some respects, because the grave 63 contained no remains of adult individuals and at least 13 infants and children, and bones buried in the grave 74 were most likely deliberately arranged.

Table 2: Age-at-death pattern
and the minimum number of individuals in the studied sample.

Grave	0-1	1.5-6	7-14	adults	total	MNI after
62		1		4	5	left mandible
63	6	5	2		13	dentition, right temporal bone
66		1			1	
67		1		3	4	left temporal bone
68			1	13	14	right mandible
69		1	1	4	6	right temporal bone
70				1	1	
72		1		3	4	left mandible
73				1	1	
74				6	6	right mandible
total	6	10	4	35	55	

Taphonomy

Most human remains from Lama were disarticulated and almost all graves were most likely intended for consecutive burials as is also indicated by the large size of many of them. Some graves were found filled with earth, probably due to slow infiltration. In other tombs, however, there was an empty space between the gabled roof and the top rows of

horizontal stones of the burial chamber and the bones and objects were clearly to be seen upon opening of the graves. The excavations gives us an insight into the burial practice: each time a new body was entered the bones of the previous burials were disturbed or more or less gathered or pushed aside and often rather carelessly grouped in the tomb. In most cases human remains were exposed on the surface for a long time or covered only by a very thin layer of subsequent deposits. For that reason, in most cases erosion (including weathering) was evident (Pl. 3a). Even tooth enamel sometimes eroded substantially, especially in the burials 66 and 68.

Evidence of water staining was quite common and in at least eight cases (including seven in grave 68) clear line of white or yellowish microcrystalline deposit demarked areas of bones differing by colour and erosion (Pl. 3b). This feature was most common on crania (Pl. 4a). Several bone fragments with irregular often yellowish microcrystalline deposits were found in graves 66, 68 and 72, the last one containing most prominent examples (Pl. 4b).

Grave 63 contained a small quantity of cremains of a child 5-6 years old; they were white and occasionally grey or blue, heavily fragmented and deformed (Pl. 5a). No evidence of cremation was found in other contexts, although the surface of several fragments from grave 72 was discoloured to dark brown, perhaps due to slight exposure to heat (Pl. 5b). Root etching was not frequent in the sample of human remains from Lama, with quite a few examples in grave 72.

Several effects of animal activity have been observed in the studied sample. Most of them were caused by invertebrates, there is only one fragment of ilium with possible tooth marks of an carnivorous animal (Grave 74, Pl. 6a) and one femoral shaft with possible rodent tooth marks (Grave 68, Pl. 6b). It is possible, however, that at least rodents could find easy access to the graves with only partial filling, but their tooth marks were erased by subsequent erosion.

Insect tunneling was common in graves 68 and 69. Tunnels ranged from 0.5 to 6 mm in diameter and most of them perforated cranial vault bones (Pl. 7a). It was possible to measure diameters of 39 such features and their distribution in four contexts is shown on the Pl. 7b. Only small holes, up to 2mm in diameter, were present in bones from grave 68 and both small and larger holes (3-4mm in diameter) were observed in grave 69, average diameters are 1.2mm (standard deviation 0.6) and 2.1mm (standard deviation 1.3) respectively. Some tunnels went through the bone, while others

(12/39) ended in the diploe of the cranial vault or entered only the surface of the cortical bone. In the latter subset the larger tunnels dominated and the difference in diameter between full and partial perforations is significant (Mann-Whitney U test, $Z=3.09$, $p=0.002$), with average diameter 1.6mm (standard deviation 1.2) in the former and 3.3mm (standard deviation 1.4) in the latter. Among the penetrating holes 3mm in diameter and wider, four were observed on the cranial vault and one in a fragment of femoral or humeral head, while 3 per 12 large non-penetrating holes occurred in the cortical bone of femoral or tibial midshaft (Pl. 7c). Size difference and distribution of insect tunneling suggests that at least two different taxa were responsible for such kind of taphonomic effect, one smaller but able to drill easily through bone, one larger but less potent.

Sex and age distribution

Sex diagnosis appeared to be very difficult in the Lama sample. No pubic symphysis was preserved and only in case of two ilia from grave 68 it was possible to observe the shape of the greater sciatic notch, one belonging to a male and one to a female individual. Morphological features of the skull produce much less reliable sex assessment, chiefly due to high inter-population variability. In the Lama sample, slight bias towards female sex was observed in case of most features, but this tendency is not significant (Table 3) and may reflect rather a specific morphological variability in a local population than actual sex bias in the sample of buried individuals from Lama.

Another method of sex assessment is based on size differences between males and females. Especially articular surfaces of limb joints and bone shaft circumferences exhibit a certain degree of sexual dimorphism. In case of Lama, femoral midshaft circumference (measured in 10 cases) and length of upper articular surface in talus (measured in 6 cases) may have been used for sex assessment. Using discriminant values obtained for Mesopotamian archaeological samples, sex assessment based on both measurement suggested a balanced sex ratio (see Table 4 for details).

Table 3: Sex assessment using skull morphological features (after Buikstra & Ubelaker 1994). Scale from 1 (most likely female individual) through 3 (ambiguous sex) to 5 (most likely male individual).

Grave	Mastoid Process L					Mastoid Process R					Supraorbital Margin L					Supraorbital Margin R				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
62		1						1				1								
67													1		1					
68	3	4		2		2	3	2	1		1	3	2	1		1	3	3		1
69	2					1				1	1					1				
72				1																
73										1										
74	1			1					1	1		1						1	1	
Total	6	5	0	4	0	3	3	3	2	3	2	5	3	1	1	2	3	4	1	1

Grave	Nuchal Crest					Glabella					Mental Eminence				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
62						1		1				1	3		
67									2						
68	5	2		1		2	4	3	1			4	1	2	
69	1						1						1		
72															1
74									1			1	1		1
Total	6	2	0	1	0	3	5	4	4	0	0	6	6	2	2

Table 4: Sex assessment using measurements of femoral midshaft circumference and length of upper articular surface in talus; discriminant values after Sottysiak 2010a, Table 22.

Grave	Femoral midshaft circumference		Talar articular surface	
	Measurements	Sex assessment	Measurements	Sex assessment
?	89.5	M		
68	81.5, 89.0	F, M	34.0	F
69	89.0, 91.0, 92.0	M, M, M	37.0	M
72	69.5	F	32.5	F
73	75.5, 82.5	F, F		
74	87.0	F	33.0, 35.0, 37.5	F, M, M

Reliable age-at-death assessment in case of adult individuals was not possible due to extremely poor state of preservation of bones and also due to the small number of teeth which could have been securely attributed to the particular individuals, but at least adult remains could have been distinguished from subadult skeletons, and in case of preserved dentition, more precise age-at-death of subadults was scored. Human remains from most graves are very few and it was possible to compare age-at-death distributions only for graves 63 and 68 with greatest number of individuals. In spite of the very small sample size, the difference is striking, with no adult remains retrieved from grave 63 and only one subadult present in grave 68 (see Table 2). This difference is statistically significant (Fisher's exact test, $p < 0.001$) and this is evident that grave 63 was a burial place exclusively for children and especially for infants. Thus, the burial rite exercised by the users of the Lama cemetery included separation of adults and children, although this rule was not very restrictive and occasionally some children were buried together with adults. The proportion of adults and subadults in the whole sample is more or less consistent with the regular mortality pattern expected in a pre-industrial population, only with an underestimated number of newborn children and infants. However, this bias was possibly related to a greater susceptibility of their small bones to erosion.

In general, the tooth wear degree was relatively high in the whole sample, with $14/32 = 44\%$ of lower M1 with grade 7-10, so belonging to individuals older than 35 years according to Brothwell's (1981) scale and only 9 individuals (28%) with grade 1-4, and thus younger than 25 years. However, the irregular dental wear often present in the Lama skeletal sample (see below) makes such an assessment of the age-at-death not completely reliable.

Stress markers

No active cribra orbitalia was scored per 9 right and 8 left orbitae preserved enough to observe this condition. However, in 3 right and 2 left orbitae some traces of obliterated porosity were noted. Porotic hyperostosis was also virtually absent in all preserved fragments of cranial vault, including 11 individuals from the grave 68 with more than 50% of the cranial vault preserved. The only porotic hyperostosis was observed in a cranial fragment retrieved from the grave 69 (Pl. 8a), but in spite of this single case it may be concluded that this condition was also rare. Porotic hyperostosis is interpreted

as the sign of megaloblastic anemia and cribra orbitalia may be developed both in megaloblastic anemia and in scurvy (Walker et al. 2009), so it is likely that both these metabolic diseases were not frequent in the Lama population.

Enamel hypoplasia was scored for 122 upper and 141 lower permanent teeth. The sample size was too small to check for any differences between graves, so only general scores for the whole sample are presented in Table 5. Frequency of at least one palpable line (scores 2 and 3) was counted for all 16 tooth categories and the average mean for all teeth is 20%. This figure is the same as in the roughly contemporary sample from Tell Barri located in the Khabur valley, north-eastern Syria, and is much higher than in the Achaemenian sample from Tell Barri (9%) and the Middle Bronze Age sample from the same site (12%) (Sołtysiak 2010b). It may be very cautiously concluded then that the general environmental stress in the Lama population was relatively high, although more spatially and chronologically diversified comparative samples are necessary to support this statement.

Table 5: Linear enamel hypoplasia scores for permanent teeth.

	Upper Right				Upper Left				Lower Right				Lower Left			
	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
I1	3	1			4	3			2		1		6			
I2	4		1	1	5	1	1	1	3		1		2		1	
C	4		5	1	1	4	3			2	1		3		1	1
P1	3	2	3		2	1	3		5	1	2		7		2	
P2	6	2		1	4		2		5	2	2		5	2	3	
M1	11		1		7	1			17				11			
M2	7	1	3		4	2	3		12	1	1		17	1		
M3	3	1			2	3			8	2			8	1	2	

Diet

Dental caries is a disease caused by acidophilous bacteria feeding on fermentable sugars (Hillson 1996), so the frequency of this condition may be used as a proxy indicator of the amount of consumed sucrose, glucose and fructose. In the sample from Lama, carious lesions were recorded in

22 permanent teeth (see Table 6 for details). Frequency of this disease was counted separately for 12 tooth categories (incisors and canines combined) and the average mean frequency is 8.5%, a bit higher than in the Late Bronze Age and Neo-Assyrian sample from Tell Barri (5%), but lower than the Middle Bronze Age and Achaemenian samples from the latter site (11% and 31% respectively) (Sołtysiak 2010b). So, it may be concluded that the consumption of fermentable sugars was rather low in the Lama population. Dental caries was noted also in 2 per 23 preserved deciduous teeth. In both permanent and deciduous teeth most frequent place of initial demineralisation was interproximal cemento-enamel junction (17 per 22 teeth), then buccal (3 cases) and lingual (1 case) cemento-enamel junction, finally one carious lesion was noted in the crown groove. Such distribution is expected in a population with poor oral hygiene where even in relatively small intake of sugars, food particles fill gaps between teeth, especially in posterior dentition.

Observation of the dental wear pattern may give also some insight into diet of ancient populations. In agricultural populations of northern Mesopotamia, the pattern of dental wear was quite predictable, with lingual cusps more worn in upper molars and buccal cusps more worn in lower molars. Such a pattern may be assumed to be typical for habitual chewing. In Lama, the pattern of dental wear is much less predictable and in most cases medial and distal crown side is more contrasted by the wear degree than lingual and buccal side and sometimes the wear pattern is irregular (Pl. 8b). It suggests that teeth were used rather for crushing than for chewing.

Table 6: Dental caries in permanent teeth. 0 – no lesion, 1 – lesion less than 2mm in diameter, 2 – lesion 2-6mm in diameter, 3 – lesion more than 6mm in diameter.

	Upper Right				Upper Left				Lower Right				Lower Left			
	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
I1	2				6				2				7			
I2	6				6				5				2			
C	8		1		9				4				5			
P1	5				7				10				8			
P2	7				5				9				7		2	
M1	11		1		6		1	1	13	2	1		11		2	
M2	9	1		1	8			1	13	1	1		16			
M3	4				3			1	8		3		9	1		1

Physical activity

General degree of mobility may be assessed by analysis of femoral shaft geometry (Wescott 2007), with assumption that the higher mobility, the more developed femoral midshaft in the antero-posterior plane. Only ten femoral midshaft may have been measured in Lama, and the average pilasteric index (antero-posterior / meso-lateral diameter \times 100) for males and females is presented in Table 7 together with some comparative samples from Northern Mesopotamia (Sołtysiak 2010a). There is no difference among females, but in males the antero-posterior development of femoral midshaft is the highest in Lama cemetery comparing to other samples, although this difference is significant only between Lama and Tell Ashara/Tell Masaikh ($t=2.54$, $p=0.024$). However, such a result suggests higher mobility in males than in females buried in the Lama cemetery (in spite of the very small sample size the difference between sexes is statistically significant at the 10% level; $t=1.94$, $p=0.088$) and — moreover — that the higher mobility of males was perhaps related to their activity in the high mountain valleys as comparing to the flat topography of Northern Mesopotamia.

Table 7: Pilasteric index for the Lama skeletal sample and comparative samples from Northern Mesopotamia.

Site, Chronology	Males			Females		
	n	mean	s.d.	n	mean	s.d.
Lama, Late Bronze Age	5	117.1	11.1	5	104.4	9.5
Tell Majnuna, Late Chalcolithic	41	113.1	12.2	60	104.1	9.6
Tell Ashara / Tell Masaikh, historical periods	11	105.7	6.9	11	104.9	5.6
Chagar Bazar, Middle Bronze Age	3	108.5	7.4	4	102.9	7.2

Habitual carrying of heavy loads may accelerate the development of the degenerative joint disease, especially in spine and in the knee joint. However, for research on this aspect of physical activity more precise age assessment and large sample size are necessary, so in case of the Lama cemetery it is not possible to draw any reliable conclusion. The degenerative joint disease was more common in lumbar vertebrae than in thoracic and cervical part of the spine (see Table 8), but such a pattern is typical.

Only a few appendicular joints were preserved and no even superficial review of their pattern of degenerative joint disease is possible.

Table 8: Degenerative joint disease in the spine.

Vertebrae	Spondylosis (vertebral bodies)			Osteoarthritis (articular surfaces)		
	Grade 0	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 0	Grade 1	Grade 2
Cervical	3	1	—	14	—	—
Thoracic	13	—	2	28	—	—
Lumbar	3	4	2	21	3	1

Disease

No fractures nor infectious disease were recorded in the Lama skeletal sample, the absence of the latter was perhaps related to strong postmortem erosion. There were, however, quite frequent dental pathologies. Resorption of the alveolar process by 4 millimeters or more was noted in 5 individuals (three from grave 68, single from graves 72 and 74); in all cases advanced dental wear suggested quite old age-at-death of all of them.

Table 9: Antemortem tooth loss and dental abscesses.

	Antemortem tooth loss								Dental abscess							
	Upper				Lower				Upper				Lower			
	Right		Left		Right		Left		Right		Left		Right		Left	
	–	+	–	+	–	+	–	+	–	+	–	+	–	+	–	+
I1	5	1	5		19	1	18	1	6		5		20		19	
I2	6		5		19		17		6		5		19		17	
C	6		5		19		17		6		5		19		17	
P1	6		6		20		15	1	6		6		19	1	16	
P2	6		6		18	2	14	1	6		5	1	19	1	15	
M1	6	1	8	1	18	2	13	2	6	1	9		18	2	11	4
M2	7	1	3	2	13	6	15	1	7	1	5		19		15	1
M3	3	1	4		13		11	1	4		4		12	1	12	

Antemortem tooth loss was present in 25 out of 371 preserved tooth sockets and abscess was noted in 15 cases, both connected with antemortem tooth loss and with tooth still present (see Table 9). All these figures are expected in a skeletal sample with several older individuals, as suggested by advanced dental wear.

Conclusion

The sample of human remains from the Lama cemetery was small, most retrieved elements were strongly eroded and this made only very preliminary observations possible. Most individuals were deposited in rather large burials intended for multiple burials, although single burials were also attested. The youngest children had been separated from adults, but adults of both sexes had been likely buried together. At the present stage, it was not possible to check whether people deposited in a tomb were related to each other. Many of the bodies decayed in the empty space between the gabled roof and the top layer of earth of the burial chamber. This means most likely that the bodies and objects were only covered by a thin layer of subsequent deposits resulting in easy access for insects and rodents. Infiltration of water accelerated the erosion of bone.

It may be deduced from ecological context that the people buried in Lama cemetery were nomadic pastoralists and this observation is confirmed by a possible high general level of mobility, especially in males, and a low intake of fermentable sugars in the diet. The environmental stress was quite high, although diet rich in animal products prevented megaloblastic anemia. No signs of violence were observed, and periodontal disease was quite common due to poor oral hygiene.

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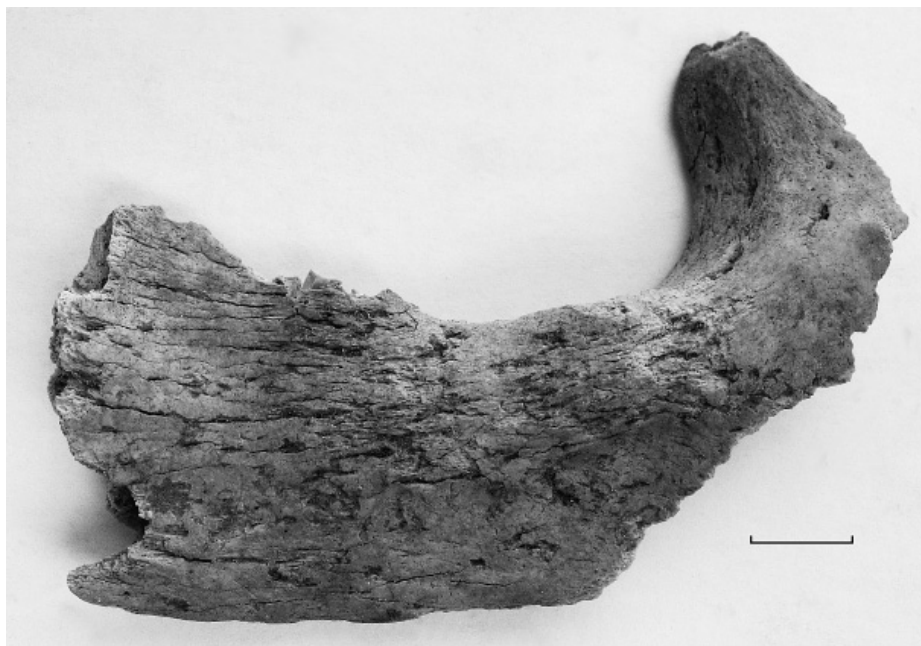
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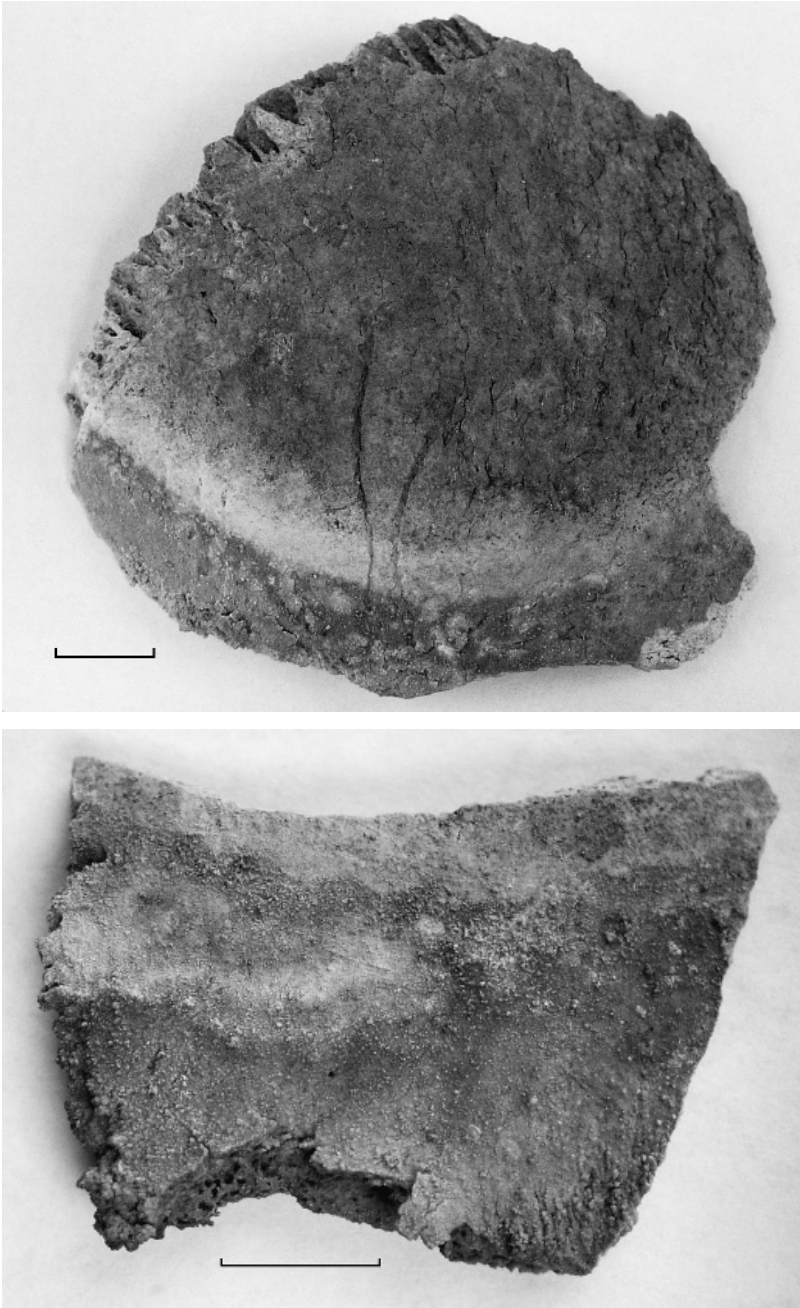
Pl. 1. a. The location of the site (marked with arrow);
b. General view of the excavated area.
Both pictures courtesy of Mohammad Javad Jafari.



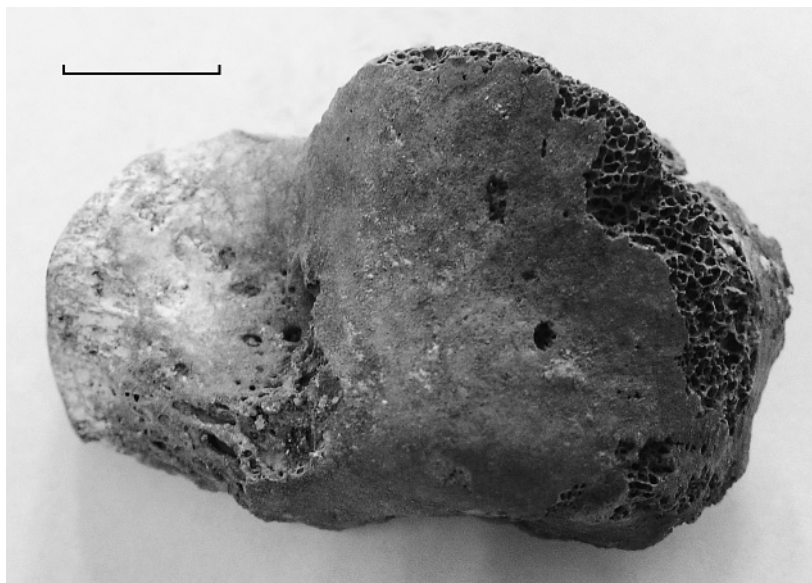
Pl. 2. a. Construction of the grave 69;
b. Human remains in situ. Grave 69.
Both pictures courtesy of Mohammad Javad Jafari.



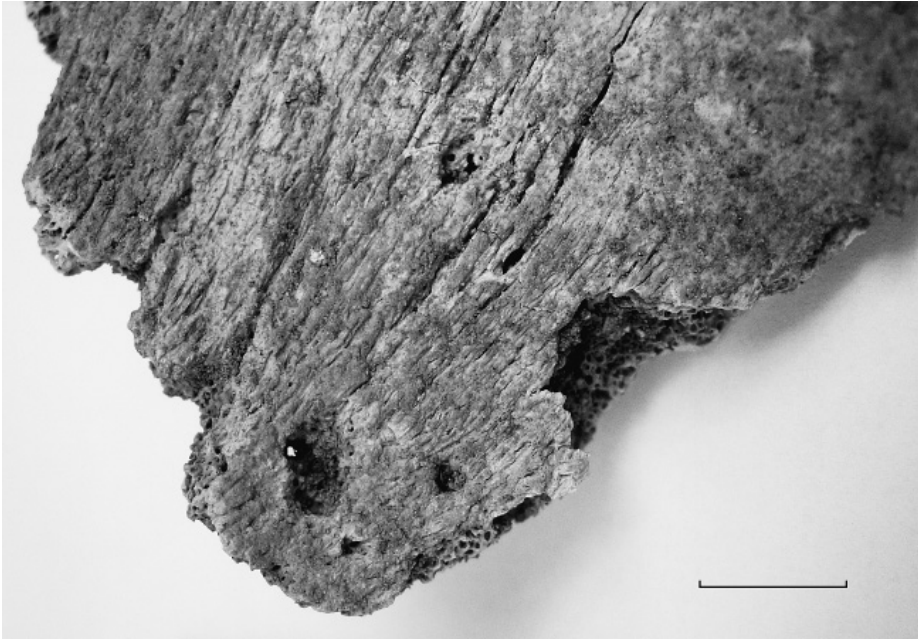
Pl. 3. a. Advanced stage of weathering, mandible. Grave 68, depth 180-200cm;
b. Evidence of water staining, tibia and fibula. Grave 68. Scale bar 1 cm.



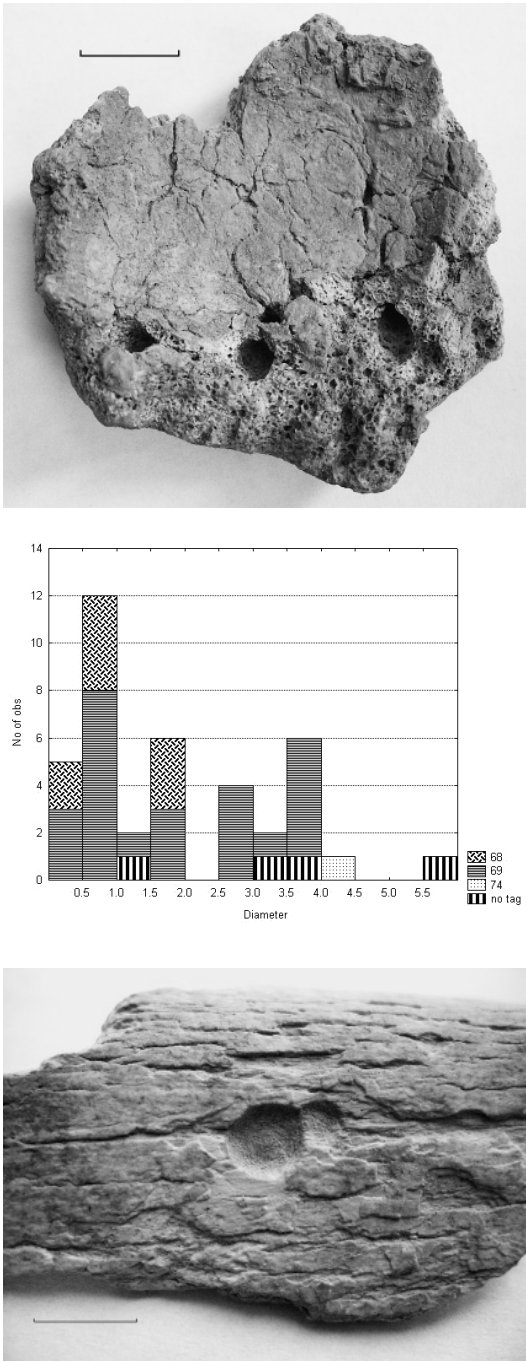
Pl. 4. a. Evidence of water staining, cranium. Grave 74, locus 4;
b. Microcrystalline deposit on bone surface, cranium.
Grave 72, locus 3, skull 6. Scale bar 1 cm.



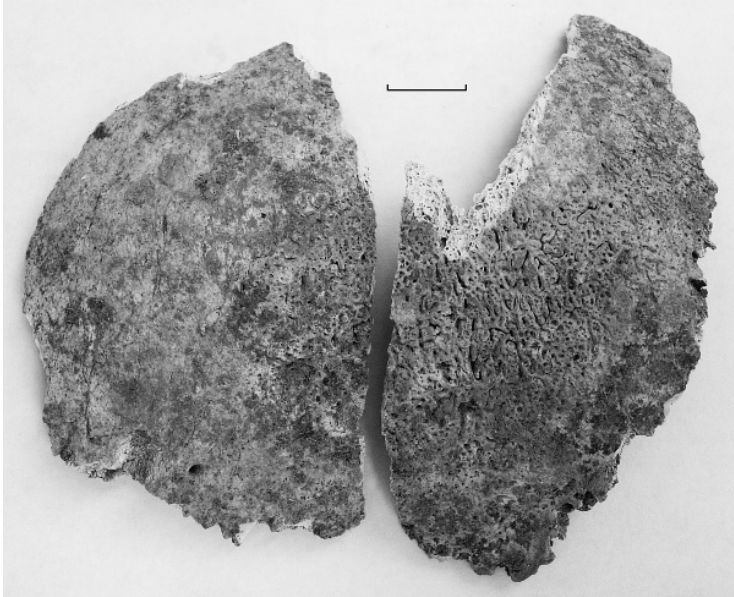
Pl. 5. a. Cremains of a child. Grave 63, object 12;
b. Evidence of slight exposure to heat, talus.
Grave 72, locus 3, tag 56. Scale bar 1 cm.



Pl. 6. a. Possible tooth marks of a carnivorous animal, ilium. Grave 74, locus 4;
b. Possible rodent tooth marks, femur. Grave 68, locus 6. Scale bar 1 cm.



Pl. 7. a. Multiple insect tunneling, cranium. Grave 69, locus 7, object 142;
b. Distribution of insect hole diameters in graves 68, 69 and 74;
c. Insect hole, femur (?). Grave 74. Scale bar 1 cm.



Pl. 8. a. Porotic hyperostosis, cranial vault. Grave 69, locus 7, object 62;
b. Irregular wear pattern in lower molars. Grave 68, locus 6, object TB2.
Scale bar 1 cm.

**LES CULTURES « À CÉRAMIQUE MODELÉE PEINTE »
EN ASIE CENTRALE :
UN APERÇU DE L'ASSEMBLAGE CÉRAMIQUE
DE LA DEUXIÈME MOITIÉ DU 2^e MILLÉNAIRE AV. N.È.**

PAR

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Abstract : This article, *The “Painted ware cultures” in Central Asia : an overview of the ceramic assemblage of the 2nd half of the IInd millennium BCE*, is based on the examination of a large corpus of first-hand data and summarizes current knowledge about the ceramics of the early Iron Age Central Asian “Painted ware cultures”. It exposes, at a macro-regional scale, the important diversity of the ceramics production, including its various technological, morphological and stylistic aspects. It discusses the conditions of production, the degree of complexity and the analyses of the distribution of the different categories of ceramics, which allows to identify three distinct technological provinces. It is suggested that these regionalisms are partly connected to regionally different Bronze Age culture influences.

Keywords : Central Asia, early Iron Age, Painted ware cultures, ceramics, hand-made pottery, painted decoration.

Dans le monde sédentaire agricole de l'Asie centrale méridionale, le Fer ancien (env. 1500/1400 – 1000/900 av. n.è¹.) est caractérisé par les cultures dites « à céramique modelée peinte » ou cultures Jaz I (Lhuillier 2010). Cet ensemble culturel succède à la brillante civilisation de l'Oxus de l'âge du Bronze (Francfort 2009) et sera suivi, un demi-millénaire plus tard, par la conquête achéménide lors de l'âge du Fer récent (Briant 1984). Entre les deux, le début de l'âge du Fer est considéré comme une période de forte régression matérielle, socio-économique et culturelle. À l'âge du Bronze,

¹ D'abord datées entre 900 et 600 av. n.è. lors de leur découverte par V.M. Masson (1959 : 49), ces cultures sont désormais « vieilles » d'un demi-millénaire grâce à un ensemble de dates C 14 et à une meilleure connaissance de la stratigraphie de l'âge du Bronze (Francfort & Kuz'mina 1999 ; Lhuillier 2010 : 381-389).

la civilisation de l'Oxus (env. 2300-1700 av. n.è. ; Francfort 2003) était caractérisée par une société complexe proto-urbaine. L'artisanat comprenait principalement une céramique tournée de qualité, une orfèvrerie et une vaisselle en pierre richement travaillée, supports d'une iconographie développée. Les pratiques funéraires étaient complexes et variées, comportant notamment sur le site de Gonur-depe au Turkménistan des « tombes royales » d'une grande richesse (Sarianidi 2008). À cette période, l'Asie centrale était en contact avec les régions voisines et en particulier la civilisation harappéenne, le plateau iranien, la Mésopotamie et le golfe Persique, au sein des « échanges inter-iraniens » (Amiet 1986).

Après une période de déclin (entre 1700 et 1500 av. n.è. env. ; Francfort 2003), la civilisation de l'Oxus disparaît avec le début de l'âge du Fer. L'Asie centrale semble désormais repliée sur elle-même et la culture matérielle montre une totale transformation. Cette période est également marquée par des bouleversements idéologiques majeurs, notamment dans les pratiques mortuaires, où les inhumations disparaissent presque totalement pour être remplacées par l'exposition des corps et le décharnement.

Sous le terme « cultures à céramique modelée peinte », on regroupe un ensemble de petites cultures (fig. 1) présentant chacune des spécificités matérielles propres mais qu'unissent des caractéristiques communes. Elles sont connues au Turkménistan en Margiane² (Masson 1959), dans le piémont nord du Kopet Dagh³ (Boucharlat, Francfort & Lecomte 2005) et plus ponctuellement sur le cours moyen de l'Amu-darya⁴ (Pilipko 1979) ; dans le Khorasan iranien⁵ (Venco Ricciardi 1980) ; en Afghanistan en Bactriane⁶ méridionale (Sarianidi 1989) ; dans le sud-est du Tadjikistan en Bactriane septentrionale orientale (Vinogradova, Ranov & Filomonova 2008) ; en Ouzbékistan, tout d'abord en Bactriane septentrionale occidentale (Askarov & Al'baum 1979), mais aussi en Sogdiane méridionale⁷ (Isamiddinov & Khasanov 2000) et septentrionale⁸ (Rapin 2007), dans le

² La zone des bras asséchés du delta endoréique du fleuve Murghab, à limite orientale du désert du Kara Kum.

³ Ensemble culturel étroitement lié à la Margiane.

⁴ Il correspond à la région actuelle de Turkmenabad.

⁵ La province nord-est de l'Iran, sur le versant sud du Kopet Dagh.

⁶ L'espace de plaine organisée autour du bassin de l'Amu-darya.

⁷ Elle correspond à l'actuelle province administrative du Kashka-darya, le long du cours moyen du fleuve du même nom.

⁸ Elle correspond à l'actuelle province de Samarkand et au bassin du Zeravshan.

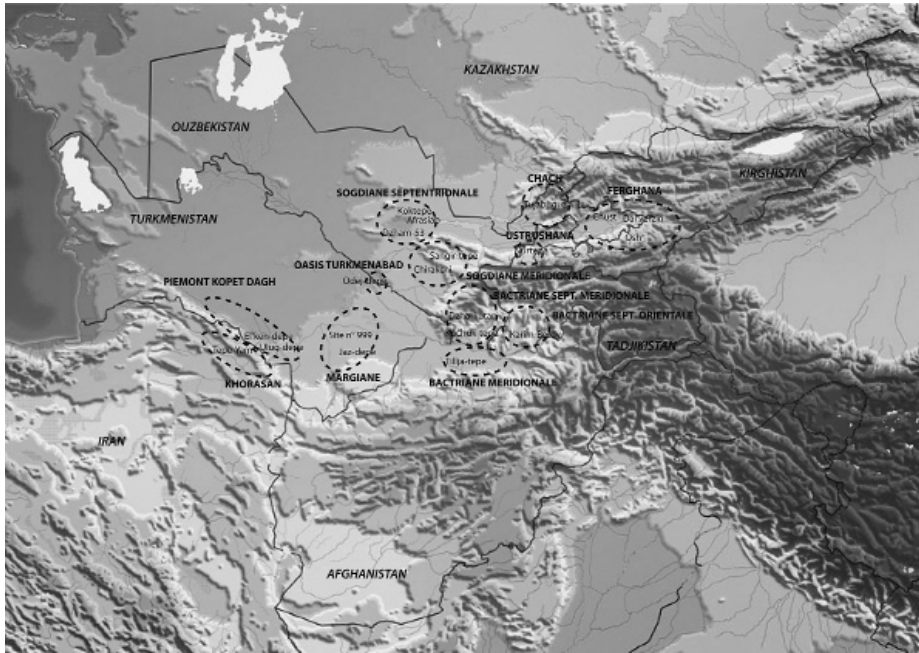


Fig. 1. Localisation des cultures de l'âge du Fer ancien, avec l'emplacement des principaux sites mentionnés dans le texte.

Chach⁹ (Duke 1982a), en Ustrushana¹⁰ (Beljajeva 1991) et enfin dans la vallée du Ferghana (Zadneprovskij 1962) qui s'étend aussi au Kirghizstan (Zadneprovskij 1997).

D'après les publications, les rapports de fouille inédits et les registres des musées, 247 sites du Fer ancien ont pu être recensés sur l'ensemble du territoire centrasiatique (Lhuillier 2010 ; sp). Malgré l'étendue du territoire ainsi couvert et en dépit de l'existence de particularités locales, le matériel provenant de ces sites forme un ensemble culturel et économique cohérent, dans lequel les populations sédentaires pratiquent l'agriculture et l'élevage.

L'assemblage matériel des cultures à céramique modelée peinte est composé principalement d'objets utilitaires¹¹, des outils et des armes en

⁹ L'actuelle oasis de Tashkent.

¹⁰ Espace situé au nord de la chaîne de montagnes Turkestan, chevauchant l'Ouzbékistan et le Tadjikistan.

¹¹ Seule exception connue pour l'instant, un ensemble de figurines en argile a été découvert à Majdatepa par la Mission Germano-Ouzbèke (Boroffka 2009 : fig. 8).

pierre ou en alliage cuivreux, ainsi que de céramique, qui constitue l'écrasante majorité du matériel mis au jour. Elle diffère totalement de ce que l'on connaissait à l'âge du Bronze et elle disparaît avec le début de l'âge du Fer moyen (vers 1000/900 av. n.è. ; Francfort 2003). Dès sa découverte dans les années 1950, V. M. Masson (1959 : 34-38) en a relevé les traits distinctifs, à savoir le recours au modelage et l'existence de décors peints, qui en font une céramique relativement « aisée » à identifier dans l'ensemble de l'Asie centrale. Or, l'assemblage céramique de ces cultures est en réalité beaucoup plus diversifié qu'il n'y paraît, d'autant plus que les variations que l'on peut observer apparaissent après corrélation avec les autres données disponibles comme l'un des seuls indicateurs des conditions économiques et socioculturelles régionales. Le présent article a pour objectif principal de présenter une première approche typo-chronologique et technologique de cet ensemble céramique.

I. Corpus et méthodes

Cette étude est basée sur l'analyse d'un ensemble d'environ 7000 tessons, dont plus de 6000 sont inédits, provenant de treize sites répartis dans l'ensemble de l'Asie centrale méridionale (fig. 2). En mettant en relation la céramique de ces sites parfois éloignés les uns des autres, nous avons dégagé à la fois des éléments communs à ces cultures et des particularités locales, que nous avons ensuite pu interpréter à un niveau régional.

Pour l'essentiel, ce matériel provient de trois sites fouillés par des missions françaises en Asie centrale. Le premier est Ulug-depe dans le piémont du Kopet Dagh au Turkménistan, placé depuis 2001 sous la responsabilité d'O. Lecomte et M. Mamedov (Mission Archéologique Française au Turkménistan). Sa séquence stratigraphique, la plus longue d'Asie centrale, en fait un site clé pour la compréhension des changements socio-économiques et culturels qui marquent l'Asie centrale à l'âge du Fer (Lecomte 2007). Le deuxième site est Dzharkutan en Bactriane septentrionale, près de Termez en Ouzbékistan, où travaille depuis 2007 la Mission Archéologique Franco-Ouzbek — Protohistoire codirigée par J. Bendezu-Sarmiento et S. Mustafakulov (Bendezu-Sarmiento & Mustafakulov 2008). Bien qu'il soit mieux connu pour ses niveaux de l'âge du Bronze, le site a été occupé jusqu'au Fer ancien, ce qui permet d'étudier la délicate question de la transition entre les âges du Bronze et du Fer. Le troisième site, fouillé entre 1996 et 2008 par la Mission Archéologique Française

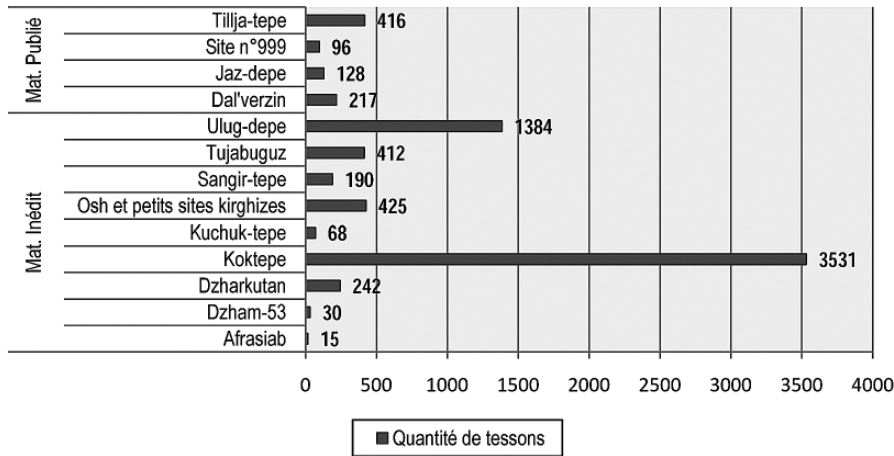


Fig. 2. Quantité de tessons pris en compte dans la présente étude.

en Ouzbékistan de Sogdiane sous la responsabilité de C. Rapin et M. Isamiddinov, est celui de Koktepe en Sogdiane, près de Samarkand, site occupé tout au long de la séquence de l'âge du Fer, à la croisée du monde sédentaire méridional et du monde semi-nomade septentrional (Rapin 2007). Les sites d'Afrasiab et de Sangir-tepe, tous deux également fouillés par la MAFOuz de Sogdiane, ont aussi fourni de la céramique inédite, de même que le site de Dzham-53, fouillé par la Mission Italienne en Ouzbékistan dirigée par M. Tosi et A. Berdimuradov¹².

D'autres corpus largement inédits (céramique bien stratifiée) proviennent de sites fouillés plus anciennement, dans les années 1970-1980, mais qui n'ont été que partiellement publiés par les archéologues soviétiques¹³. Pour l'essentiel, il s'agit de sites d'Ouzbékistan, notamment

¹² Nous remercions vivement tous les responsables de ces missions archéologiques pour l'aide apportée.

¹³ Cette céramique est conservée en Ouzbékistan dans les réserves de l'Institut d'Archéologie et du musée du Reghistan à Samarkand, dans les réserves du musée d'Archéologie de Termez et dans les collections du musée National de Tashkent ; au Kirghizstan dans les réserves du musée d'Histoire et d'Archéologie Sulejman-Too et au musée de site d'Osh.

Dzharkutan (fouille de Sh.B. Shajdullaev), Tujabuguz (fouille de Kh.I. Duke), Kuchuk-tepe (fouille d'A.A. Askarov et de L.I. Al'baum), Chust (fouille de Ju.A. Zadneprovskij), mais aussi de sites kirghizes, Osh et plusieurs établissements de la vallée du Ferghana¹⁴ (fouilles de Ju.A. Zadneprovskij et D. Vinnik).

Cette étude a ensuite été complétée dans une optique typologique par l'ensemble de la céramique publiée, qui concerne un total de 73 sites. Au sein de cet ensemble, nous avons accordé une attention toute particulière aux données provenant de quatre sites considérés comme représentatifs des cultures de l'âge du Fer ancien et complémentaires des précédents, à la fois par leur position géographique et par la qualité des données les concernant, à savoir Jaz-depe (Masson 1959) et le site n° 999 en Margiane (Bonora & Vidale 2008), Tillja-tepe en Bactriane méridionale (Sarianidi 1989) et Dal'verzin dans la vallée du Ferghana (Zadneprovskij 1962).

Un corpus si important constitue une spécificité dans l'étude de l'âge du Fer en Asie centrale : habituellement menées à l'échelle intra-site, les analyses portant sur la question sont toutes déjà anciennes ou bien circonscrites à une petite échelle géographique. Les résultats présentés ici viennent donc préciser, compléter et renouveler les connaissances sur les productions céramiques de l'âge du Fer ancien.

L'analyse morphologique, stylistique et parfois technologique a permis d'identifier trois grandes catégories de céramique, pour les unes communes à l'ensemble des cultures à céramique modelée peinte (céramique modelée à pâte claire), pour les autres plus spécifiques et plus localisées (céramique modelée à pâte grise et céramique tournée) (fig. 3).

II. La céramique de l'âge du Fer ancien

A. *La céramique modelée à pâte claire*

La très grande majorité de ces vases est modelée au colombin, mais les bols de petite dimension peuvent aussi être façonnés par creusement et étirement d'une boule d'argile. Certains vases sont également partiellement

¹⁴ Khozhambag, Karakochkor I, Dzhampalak, Établissement 33, Zhalspak-tepe, Kara-depe, Kosh-tepe, Chapan et Kurshab, ainsi que trois sites dont l'identification demeure incertaine et désignés comme SG, ST et Tepe chustkoe 2.

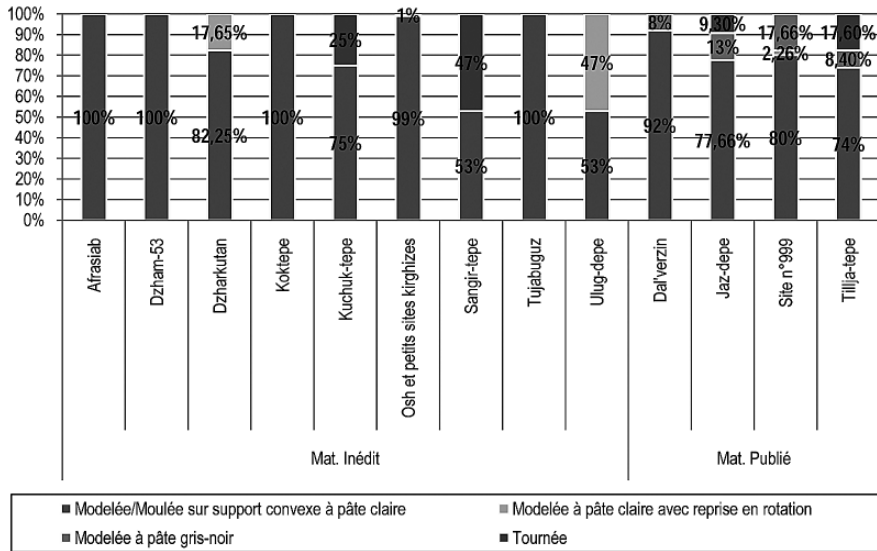


Fig. 3. Proportion des différentes catégories céramiques au sein des cultures de l'âge du Fer ancien.

moulés. Toutefois, quelle que soit la technique employée, les catégories morphologiques sont identiques.

A.1. La céramique modelée au colombin

Cette céramique se divise en deux groupes principaux, la céramique à pâte fine (pl. 1 et 2) et la céramique à pâte grossière (pl. 3).

A.1.1. La céramique à pâte fine

Ce premier groupe, majoritaire, comprend de la vaisselle de table, de service et de stockage. Les formes et leurs proportions, tout comme la pâte, le dégraissant, le traitement de surface et les décors, peuvent varier assez nettement d'un site à l'autre. Parmi les vases ouverts, les plus répandus sont des bols à paroi verticale ou convexe, mais on trouve également des jattes à paroi évasée, avec ou sans carène, des gobelets à paroi verticale et des vases miniatures (pl. 1, 1, 2, 4-5, 7, 10-12, 15, 19, 21 ; pl. 2, 1-4, 7-9, 13-17, 20-22, 23-24). Parmi les vases fermés, on trouve sur tous les sites

des jarres à panse globulaire et lèvre éversée de grande dimension (pl. 1, 3, 6, 8-9, 13-14, 17-18, 22-23 ; pl. 2, 5-6, 11, 18-19, 25). Des pots de forme comparable mais de taille plus réduite et de qualité plus fine (pl. 1, 13, 16 ; pl. 2, 10, 12), ainsi que des vases miniatures sont moins répandus. Peu de vases complets sont connus et peu de fonds sont conservés, mais on peut rattacher toutes les pièces à quatre types de bases, rondes, aplaties, plates ou discoïdales. Ces vases ont en général une pâte beige ou rosé, parfois orange-rouge ou verdâtre selon la cuisson. Cette dernière est souvent irrégulière, provoquant fréquemment des taches plus sombres, rose, rouge ou gris-noir sur la surface extérieure. Rarement, les jarres peuvent être noircies sur les deux faces, indiquant ainsi qu'elles jouaient le rôle de marmites. La pâte contient toujours un dégraissant minéral, relativement abondant, constitué par des inclusions blanches ou noires de 1-2 mm de longueur maximale. Souvent dans le cas des vases ouverts, la pâte contient également un dégraissant végétal en moindre quantité, parfois utilisé seul, et qui peut entraîner la formation de petites vacuoles à la surface. Les jarres, et plus rarement les autres catégories morphologiques, peuvent aussi être chamottées. La mauvaise préparation de la pâte se marque parfois par des craquelures et des fissures qui se forment lors du séchage. D'ailleurs, les grands vases ouverts peuvent présenter un diamètre irrégulier, voire un affaissement de la paroi. Il n'est pas rare de sentir les raccords de colombins sur la face interne, mais la paroi est généralement régularisée et atteint en moyenne 0,8-1,5 cm d'épaisseur. Les vases ouverts subissent en général un traitement de surface, notamment sur la face interne qui peut porter des traces de lissage au doigt, au chiffon ou plus rarement avec un outil de type estèque. De nombreuses pièces sont également polies, voire lustrées, ce qui leur confère un aspect brillant et lisse au toucher. La face externe des vases fermés peut ponctuellement être polie. Les seuls vases engobés, en rouge ou rouge orangé, proviennent de la vallée du Ferghana, où cette pratique est largement répandue (Zadneprovskij 1962 : 25).

A.1.2. La céramique à pâte grossière

Elle comprend surtout les vases de cuisson, ainsi que des vases de stockage grossiers. Ces derniers répètent morphologiquement des vases plus fins, ouverts ou fermés mais s'en distinguent par le caractère nettement plus grossier de leur pâte, par un moindre soin apporté à leur finition et par

un plus grand nombre d'éléments de préhension et de becs verseurs (pl. 3, 1-4, 7-11). Quant aux marmites, elles sont fréquemment noircies, mais ce n'est pas systématique. A Koktepe, en Sogdiane septentrionale (fig. 1), la part de cette céramique grossière au sein du complexe à céramique modelée peinte augmente dans une deuxième étape de l'âge du Fer ancien (Lhuillier, Isamiddinov & Rapin 2012 : 63-64), tandis qu'à Ulug-depe, dans le piémont du Kopet Dag, elles sont peu abondantes mais se développent largement après la fin des cultures à céramique modelée peinte lors de l'âge du Fer moyen (Bendezu-Sarmiento & Lhuillier 2011 : 247), ce qui en fait un marqueur chronologique tardif au sein des cultures à céramique modelée peinte. Ces vases constituent d'ailleurs quasiment le seul indice d'une évolution au sein de l'âge du Fer ancien, dont l'assemblage est en apparence resté homogène durant toute la période.

De très rares cas de marmites décorées sont connus, mais celles-ci ne portent le plus souvent aucun décor. Des couvercles discoïdaux plats, avec ou sans élément de préhension, sont au contraire fréquemment ornés (pl. 3, 12 ; pl. 4, 22). On connaît également des « poêles » (pl. 3, 5), à la face interne polie mais presque systématiquement noircie, ainsi que des « chennets », parfois pourvu d'un large trou central (pl. 3, 6), dont la fonction demeure inconnue.

Ces pièces ont une pâte très fortement dégraissée, mêlant chamotte et inclusions minérales de grande taille, de 3 à 20 mm. Plus fréquemment que pour les vases du premier groupe, la surface peut être parcourue par des micro-fissures et des vacuoles. Pour certains, la pâte présente d'ailleurs un aspect friable dû à l'abondance du dégraissant et à une cuisson peu élevée. Elle est beige, rose, orange, grise, avec des taches plus sombres dues à la cuisson. Il n'y a généralement pas de traitement de surface, mais la paroi externe de certaines marmites peut être légèrement polie.

A.2. La céramique modelée décorée

Ces vases peuvent porter un décor (pl. 4), peint le plus souvent, mais parfois aussi incisé ou appliqué. La morphologie des vases ne varie pas en fonction de la présence d'un décor. Rien ne permet donc de distinguer les vases décorés des autres du point de vue typologique, d'autant plus que le corpus est généralement très fragmentaire et que le décor est habituellement circonscrit à la partie supérieure du vase.

A.2.1. Les décors peints

Comme le laisse supposer le nom de ces cultures, les décors peints sont les plus répandus (fig. 4). Ils sont généralement monochromes¹⁵, constitués par une application d'engobe avant cuisson, qui prend une teinte rose, rouge, brun-rouge ou noir selon la cuisson subie, la nature de la pâte et l'état de conservation du tesson. De très rares cas de bichromie brun-rouge/blanc sont également connus, un tesson à Koktepe en Sogdiane (Lhuillier 2010 : fig. 57) et un sur le site n° 999 en Margiane¹⁶ (Vidale 2006 : 298).

Parmi l'ensemble de ces cultures, nous avons identifié 242 motifs peints avec leurs variantes, qui sont pour une très large majorité géométriques (pl. 4). Les thèmes les plus répandus sont les triangles, orientés vers le haut ou le bas, suivis par les bandes, mais on trouve également des losanges ou des carrés, ainsi que des motifs plus atypiques, comme des croix, des grecques ou des demi-cercles. Ces motifs peuvent être exécutés en contour, être pleins, hachurés, quadrillés, réticulés, à remplissage en damier, être constitués ou remplis de points, emboîtés, quadrillés avec remplissage alterné, subdivisés en plus petits motifs géométriques, être divisés en quarts ou en moitiés au remplissage différent. La bande horizontale pleine est le motif le plus répandu, seule ou associée à d'autres motifs. Il existe également des décors formés par de larges aplats de peinture, dans lesquels le mouvement du pinceau est perceptible, pouvant dans ce cas couvrir une grande partie de la panse, ou encore des « coups de chiffon » imbibé de peinture, irréguliers et plus ou moins couvrants. Enfin, quelques très rares motifs figuratifs sont également attestés, généralement par une seule occurrence. Des motifs zoomorphes, pas toujours identifiables, représentent des bovins aux cornes droites comme à Kuchuk-tepe (Askarov & Al'baum 1979 : fig. 13) ou recourbées¹⁷ comme à Osh (pl. 4, 33 ; Matbabaev 1999 : pl. IV). Quant au seul motif anthropomorphe connu, provenant de Dal'verzin, il représente un homme debout, les bras écartés du corps (Matbabaev 1999 : pl. III).

¹⁵ Parfois, plusieurs applications superposées d'engobe au sein d'un même décor créent une variation de teinte et peuvent ainsi évoquer une bichromie.

¹⁶ Dans ce dernier cas, le pigment blanc aurait été appliqué après cuisson et serait donc plus friable, ce qui permet au fouilleur de supposer que d'autres vases auraient pu originellement être bichromes.

¹⁷ Ce motif présente des analogies avec les représentations en style bitriangulaire des pétroglyphes de l'âge du Bronze, en particulier ceux de Sajmaly-Tash au Kirghizstan (Martynov, Mariashev & Abetekov 1992 : 26).

Ces motifs sont organisés en frise horizontale située sous la lèvre, sur un seul registre ou plus rarement sur plusieurs. Parfois, une simple ligne ou bande horizontale, ou plus rarement une autre frise de motifs géométriques, leur fait écho sur la face interne des vases (pl. 4, 2, 9, 15, 18, 23, 27). La composition de ces frises varie selon les régions. En Margiane, dans le piémont nord du Kopet Dag, dans le Khorasan, dans le cours moyen de l'Amu-darya, en Bactriane méridionale et plus rarement en Bactriane septentrionale (fig. 1), les frises sont constituées par des associations de plusieurs motifs, parfois juxtaposés sur plusieurs registres, entre lesquels alternent parfois des motifs secondaires. Ceux-ci, à la forme souvent identique à celle des motifs principaux, sont de plus petite dimension. Ce sont par exemple des points, des croix, des traits horizontaux ou verticaux, des « papillons », des courtes lignes brisées ou divers motifs géométriques isolés. Toutefois, il n'est pas rare dans ces régions de trouver de simples décors de coups de pinceaux, sur les jarres en particulier, comme à Ulugdepe (pl. 4, 23). En Sogdiane, dans le Chach et en Ustrushana, c'est-à-dire dans les zones les plus septentrionales des cultures à céramique modelée peinte (fig. 1), les frises sont au contraire composées par la répétition du même motif, généralement sans motifs secondaires (pl. 4, 1-11). Les décors de coups de chiffon, couvrants mais irréguliers, sont plus répandus dans ces régions. Toujours absents des publications, ils constituent pourtant une catégorie décorative à part entière. En effet, ils coexistent au sein de l'assemblage avec des motifs géométriques, ce qui renvoie donc à un choix stylistique et non à une contrainte technique. Dans toutes ces régions, les couvercles sont les seuls vases qui peuvent être décorés de manière libre. La vallée du Ferghana constitue une exception, puisqu'il s'agit de la seule région où les compositions verticales prédominent (pl. 4, 31-32), associant elles aussi plusieurs motifs principaux à des motifs secondaires ; mais on y trouve également des frises horizontales, dont les motifs sont étirés sur l'ensemble de la panse. Plus que la nature du remplissage des motifs, c'est donc le caractère de leur association au sein de compositions plus ou moins complexes qui forme un critère géographique pertinent. Bien que ces principes d'organisation soient sans doute codifiés — grande homogénéité au sein de chaque site ainsi qu'étroites parentés d'un site à l'autre — leur règles nous sont encore inconnues car rares sont les cas où deux vases présentent un décor en tous points comparable, ce qui porte à croire à une « libre expression individuelle » du potier.

Parmi l'ensemble des cultures à céramique modelée peinte, quatre types de décors peints existent. Le premier est présent sur tous les sites et constitue donc un dénominateur commun. Il est représenté par les bandes pleines, les points, les triangles en contour ou pleins. Le deuxième est commun à tous les sites d'une même région et d'une même culture, ou parfois à plusieurs cultures proches, et marque la parenté culturelle de ces sites¹⁸. Les motifs du troisième type, comptant pour 42 % des motifs recensés, constituent des spécificités locales qui ne sont connues que sur un seul site. Le quatrième et dernier type de décor regroupe des motifs au schéma de répartition apparemment aléatoire, attestés dans des sites distants les uns des autres.

Certains fouilleurs ont pu observer des évolutions dans la nature et la part de ces décors peints tout au long de l'âge du Fer ancien, mais tantôt la part de la céramique peinte augmente, tantôt elle diminue, tantôt les décors montrent une tendance à la complexification, tantôt à la simplification¹⁹. Il ne semble donc pas possible en l'état actuel d'étendre à l'ensemble des cultures à céramique modelée peinte des observations menées à l'échelle intra-site.

A.2.2. Les décors incisés

Moins répandus, il existe également des décors incisés (fig. 4), exécutés à la pointe mousse avant cuisson. L'incision est le plus souvent simple, mais elle peut aussi être constituée par un double trait. Quinze motifs ont été recensés, pour certains similaires aux motifs peints, pour d'autres

¹⁸ On retrouve ainsi sur plusieurs sites de Bactriane septentrionale — Dzharkutan (Shajdullaev 2002 : fig. 17, 1, 4-7, fig. 18, 6), Kuchuk-tepe (Askarov & Al'baum 1979 : pl. 7, pl. 8 ; Shajdullaev 2002 : fig. 4, 15) et Majdatepa (Rtveladze 2007 : fig. 10 ; Sverchkov & Boroffka 2007 : fig. 8) — les mêmes motifs de triangles orientés vers le bas formés par des lignes parallèles de taille décroissante ou encore de traits obliques verticaux ou obliques arqués parallèles formant des « gouttes » ou des « griffes ». En Margiane, à Jaz-depe (Masson 1959 : pl. XVII, pl. XIX, pl. XX) et sur le site n° 999 (Bonora & Vidale 2008 : fig. 11. 20, fig. 11.23 ; Vidale 2006 : pl. 8), on observe les mêmes motifs de triangles orientés vers le haut et quadrillés ou bien à remplissage alterné.

¹⁹ À Dal'verzin, la part de la céramique peinte diminue dans l'horizon stratigraphique supérieur (Zadneprovskij 1978 : 113), de même qu'à Jaz-depe (Masson 1959 : tabl. 1). Au contraire à Majdatepa (Sverchkov 2005) et à Kuchuk-tepe (Askarov & Al'baum 1979 : 50 ; Askarov, Aminov & Rakhmanov 1978 : 55), elle est plus importante dans les niveaux supérieurs. Sur ce dernier site, le nombre de motifs se réduit et les simples bandes deviennent majoritaires à la fin de la période (Shajdullaev 2002 : 256). À Chust, les triangles pleins et les engobes rouge clair seraient tardifs (Matbabaev 1999 : 53).

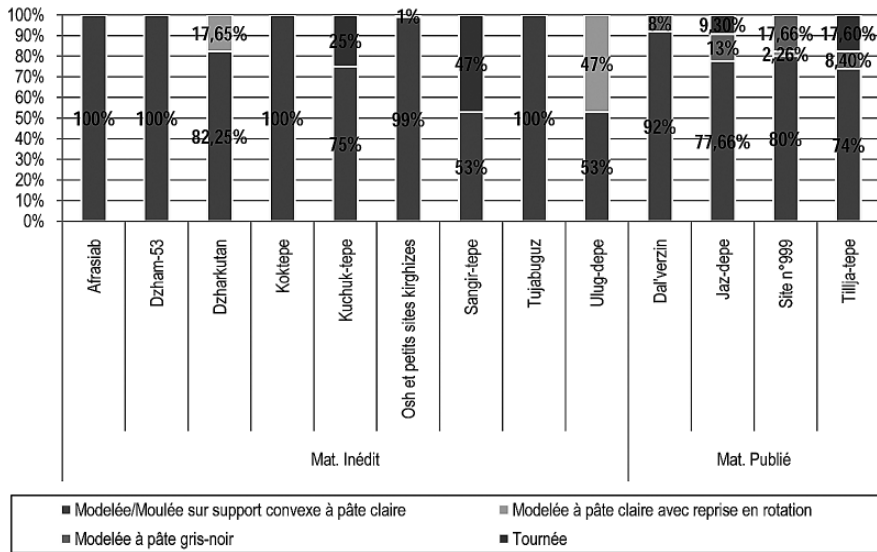


Fig. 4. Proportion des différentes techniques décoratives utilisées au sein des cultures de l'âge du Fer ancien.

présentant des variantes, parmi lesquels figurent des triangles simples ou doubles, superposés ou hachurés, des lignes horizontales droites, ondulées ou brisées, des lignes obliques ou perpendiculaires ou encore des losanges, parfois subdivisés en quatre, des alignements de points ou encore un motif de trident (pl. 4, 4, 7, 26).

Pour l'essentiel, les tessons à décor incisé proviennent de Koktepe et de Dzham-53 en Sogdiane septentrionale (matériel inédit), de Kuchuk-tepe (matériel inédit) en Bactriane septentrionale, de Tillja-tepe (Sarianidi 1972 : fig. 11, fig. 23, fig. 38) en Bactriane méridionale, et en moindre proportion de Jaz-depe (Masson 1959, pl. XXIV), Jassy-depe (Gutlyev 1970 : fig. 22) et Uch-depe (Masimov & Udeumuradov 1984 : fig. 1) en Margiane, ainsi que d'Ulug-depe dans le piémont du Kopet Dagh (matériel inédit). Un tesson découvert à Osh (inédit) indique que cette technique existe mais qu'elle demeure marginale dans la culture de Chust.

Ces décors relèvent bien d'un choix stylistique et non purement technique, ce que confirment deux tessons provenant respectivement de Kuchuk-tepe et de Koktepe, qui portent à la fois un décor peint et un décor incisé. D'ailleurs, nous avons pu observer sur ces deux sites que les décors

incisés se retrouvent de manière systématique et exclusive sur les jarres. Il semble que ce soit également le cas à Dzham-53, mais la relative petitesse des autres corpus de céramique à décor incisé ne nous permet pas de dire s'il s'agit d'une spécificité locale (en Sogdiane et Bactriane) ou d'une caractéristique générale revêtant une signification particulière.

A.2.3. Les décors plastiques

Encore plus rares que les décors incisés, ces décors sont constitués par l'application avant cuisson d'un élément plastique façonné indépendamment du vase (fig. 4). Neuf motifs seulement ont été reconnus, parmi lesquels les bandes sont les plus répandues, qu'elles soient horizontales, obliques ou perpendiculaires (pl. 4, 30). Il existe aussi des motifs de triangles ou de boules disposées en triangle. Cette technique est attestée en Margiane à Jaz-depe (Masson 1959 : pl. XX, XXII, XXIV, XXVIII), sur le site n° 999 (Bonora & Vidale 2008 : fig. 11.11, fig. 11.12), à Uch-depe (Masimov & Udeumuradov 1984 : fig. 1) et à Taip/ Khajatla (Masimov 1982 : fig. 4) ; dans le piémont du Kopet Dagh à Dashli (Masimov 1982 : fig. 4) et Ulug-depe (matériel inédit) ; en Bactriane méridionale à Tilljatepe (Sarianidi 1989 : pl. XL ; Sarianidi 1972 : fig. 9, fig. 10, fig. 12, fig. 20) et Shah Tepe (Gouin 1974) ; et en Sogdiane septentrionale à Dzham-53 (matériel inédit).

A.2.4. La proportion de céramique décorée

Cette proportion, tous types de décors confondus, est très inégale selon les établissements considérés (fig. 5). Toutefois, alors qu'elle est généralement considérée comme faible par nos collègues, comprise entre 1 et 5 % en moyenne (Masson 1959 : 35 ; Duke 1982a : 44 ; Shajdullaev 2002 : 255), elle est assez importante dans les corpus que nous avons étudiés et réévalués, et qui peuvent être considérés comme bien représentatifs de l'ensemble des cultures à céramique modelée peinte, puisqu'elle est comprise entre 0,8 et 25 %. Ainsi, à Tujabuguz dans le Chach, la part de la céramique décorée est de près de 16 %, alors que le fouilleur l'estimait à 1 %, différence qui s'explique par la prise en compte des vases décorés par un simple « coup de chiffon ». C'est sur les petits sites de la culture de Chust au Kirghizstan qu'elle est la plus faible, sites qui se distinguent d'ailleurs par un « provincialisme » par rapport aux grands sites de la même culture (Osh, Dal'verzin, Chust), marqué également par la plus

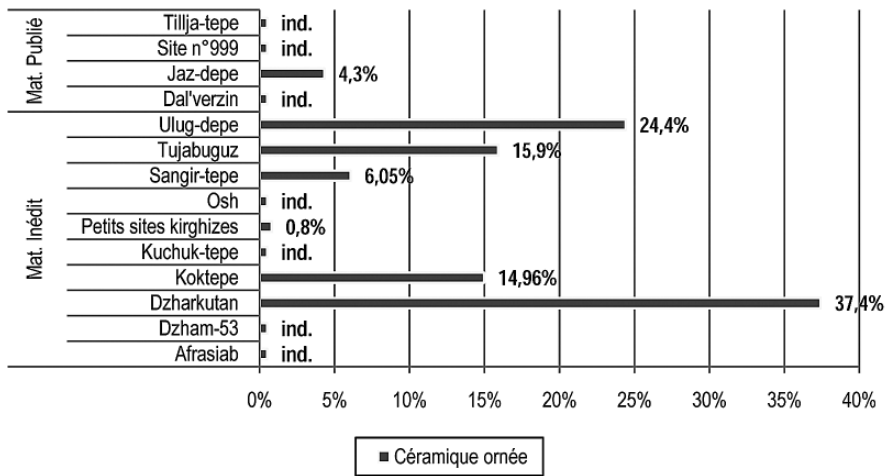


Fig. 5. Proportion de céramique décorée au sein de divers sites de l'âge du Fer ancien.

faible variété morphologique de leur assemblage. A Dzharkutan, la proportion de céramique décorée est particulièrement élevée mais cela est probablement dû au contexte de découverte des collections anciennes, majoritairement des fosses dépotoirs ; les recherches menées actuellement par la Mission Archéologique Franco-Ouzbek — Protohistoire semblent plutôt indiquer une proportion de 7-10 % (Lhuillier *et al.* sp). C'est donc à Ulug-depe qu'elle est la plus importante pour un site au contexte clairement stratifié (Bendezu-Sarmiento & Lhuillier 2011 : 246), avec toutefois des variations selon les endroits du site, qui correspondent peut-être à des différences socio-économiques à interpréter en termes de quartiers.

A.3. La céramique moulée

Au sein de la céramique à pâte claire, un petit groupe doit être distingué : les vases à pâte fine ou grossière peuvent être moulés sur un support convexe recouvert d'un tissu, mais ils sont dans ce cas morphologiquement identiques en tous points aux vases modelés et n'en diffèrent que par les empreintes de tissu qui en tapissent le fond (pl. 5). Dans le cas de petits bols (fig. 5, 1), l'ensemble de la surface est ainsi moulée, mais dans le cas de vases de taille moyenne ou grande, seule la partie inférieure est moulée,

afin de permettre le démoulage, et la partie supérieure est ensuite montée au colombin. Le raccord, au niveau du diamètre maximal du vase, peut être visible sur la face interne. De ce fait, et en raison de l'importante fragmentation de tous les corpus céramiques, il est très difficile d'estimer la part de cette technique au sein des assemblages. Parfois un lissage interne fait presque totalement disparaître ces empreintes (comme à Dzharkutan), mais le plus souvent elles sont laissées apparentes, peut-être dans une volonté esthétisante. Parmi les rares vases complets connus, aucun ne porte de décor, mais puisque celui-ci est toujours localisé dans la partie supérieure du vase tandis que les empreintes de tissu se trouvent au contraire sur le fond, il n'est pas exclu que des tessons ornés appartiennent à des vases en partie façonnés selon cette technique. Selon l'explication la plus couramment fournie en Asie centrale, explicitée par M. Kh. Isamiddinov et M. Kh. Khasanov (2000 : 22), le potier recouvre de plaques d'argile un morceau de tissu rempli de sable afin de lui donner la forme approximative du récipient qu'il veut façonner, avant de retirer le tissu pour permettre le séchage du vase²⁰. Mais dans ce cas, on pourrait s'attendre à trouver des empreintes de tissu sur toute la face interne des vases. Il semble donc également vraisemblable de supposer que le potier disposait simplement un textile sur un support convexe quelconque, pourquoi pas une poterie retournée, comme c'est le cas encore à l'heure actuelle en Afrique de l'Ouest (Mayor 2010 : 651), ce qui offre l'avantage de pouvoir réutiliser le moule et de contrôler le volume des vases produits. L'usage d'une pièce de tissu, intercalée entre ce support convexe et la plaque d'argile, facilite le mouvement de la pâte sur le moule et surtout le démoulage, rôle que joue aujourd'hui de la poussière ou de la cendre en Afrique de l'ouest (Gosselain 2002 : 89)²¹.

Plusieurs études menées sur les empreintes de tissu (Korobkova 1962 ; Mikolajchuk 2004 ; Shishkina 1979 : 122) révèlent que divers tissus usagés, comme l'indiquent les trames déformées, étaient indifféremment employés.

²⁰ Cette technique est en effet connue pour d'autres productions, comme celles de creusets en métal destinés au travail du fer dans la vallée du Ferghana durant la période islamique (Alipour, Gleba & Rehren 2007).

²¹ L'usage du tissu dans ce même contexte serait d'ailleurs connu en Afrique, bien que peu répandu (communication personnelle O. Gosselain).

Cette technique n'est pas répandue partout au sein des cultures à céramique modelée peinte, puisqu'on ne la trouve que dans les zones septentrionale et centrale (fig. 1), c'est-à-dire en Sogdiane septentrionale à Koktepe et Afrasiab (pl. 5, 1, 2, 4 ; Lhuillier *et al.* sp : fig. 2), en Sogdiane méridionale à Chirakchi (Duke 1982b : 24), dans le Chach à Tujabuguz (pl. 5, 5 ; Duke 1982a : 44), Shashtepe (Shishkina 1982 : 98) et Kaunchitepe (Burjakov & Dadabaev 1973 : 44), en Ustrushana à Nurtepa (Negmatov, Beljajeva & Mirbabaev 1987 : 312) et Khantepa (Gritsina & Sverchkov 1990 : 116), sur les sites de la vallée du Ferghana (Zadneprovskij 1962, p. 25, pl. XVI) et enfin à Dzharkutan (pl. 5, 3 ; Lhuillier *et al.* sp : fig. 3) et Kuchuk-tepe (Askarov & Al'baum 1979 : 33) en Bactriane septentrionale occidentale.

A.4. La céramique modelée mise en forme par rotation

Sur deux sites seulement, Ulug-depe dans le piémont du Kopet Dagh et Dzharkutan en Bactriane septentrionale (fig. 1), nous avons identifié des vases modelés repris en rotation. Il s'agit de vases à pâte fine, compacte et comportant un dégraissant minéral très fin, voire non dégraissée. Ils ont une teinte beige, tirant parfois vers le vert à Dzharkutan et sur le rose à Ulug-depe, avec des taches de cuisson très discrètes. Les deux faces sont polies ou au moins lissées. Plusieurs indices confirment l'usage de colombins, et notamment des sillons ou des fissures discontinues qui marquent les joints entre les colombins. De légères ondulations dues à un mauvais lissage des colombins peuvent apparaître sur la face interne, mais la paroi est tout de même mieux régularisée et affinée que dans les autres vases. De plus, de fines stries concentriques sur la face interne et parfois sur la face externe indiquent une mise en forme de ces vases sur un support rotatif, peut-être même dans certains cas dès le colombinage.

Certains traits morphologiques de ces vases, comme la rainure qui parcourt la lèvre des jarres ou le renflement interne sur la lèvre des bols de Dzharkutan (pl. 6, 1-7), résultent bien d'un mouvement de rotation. Le plus souvent pourtant, ces récipients ne diffèrent pas morphologiquement de ceux qui sont modelés, indiquant ainsi l'appartenance à une même sphère morpho-stylistique. *A contrario*, seul un nombre restreint de formes est façonné selon cette technique. A Dzharkutan, il s'agit de jarres à lèvre éversée à terminaison carrée et de vases ouverts à paroi évasée, constituant 17,6 % de l'assemblage. En dépit de leur qualité, l'épaisseur de leur paroi

est comprise entre 8 et 12 mm. A Ulug-depe, il s'agit de pots et de bols à profil en « S » (pl. 6, 8-14), constituant à eux seuls près de 47 % de l'assemblage²². De plus, seules de légères variations dans l'inclinaison de la paroi et de la lèvre, ainsi que dans le diamètre (compris entre 10 et 18 cm pour l'essentiel) caractérisent ces vases, indiquant une bonne maîtrise des formes. La paroi ne mesure pas plus de 3 à 6 mm d'épaisseur. Sur le site voisin de El'ken-depe, les pots à profil en « S » ont un diamètre comparable compris entre 11 et 18 cm (Pilipko 1991, p. 71). Sur le site n° 999, en Margiane, G. L. Bonora et M. Vidale (2008 : 178 ; Vidale 2006 : 295) ont observé qu'une partie des vases du site sont réalisés par une technique mixte similaire, dans laquelle la rotation intervient dès le colombinage ; les vases ainsi réalisés sont généralement des vases de service et de consommation, c'est-à-dire des pots ou des jarres petits à moyens, et notamment des pots à profil en « S », dont la forme et le diamètre sont constants, compris entre 10 et 18 cm pour les pots de taille moyenne (Vidale 2006 : 298, pl. XXV, 7). On observe donc le recours à une même technique pour ces vases, dont la forme et les dimensions sont similaires sur ces trois sites peu distants les uns des autres, Ulug-depe, El'ken-depe et le site n° 999.

Plus généralement, cette pratique suppose l'existence sur ces sites, et vraisemblablement sur d'autres où elle n'a pas encore été identifiée²³, de tournettes permettant une rotation lente et discontinue.

Ces vases, comme l'ensemble de la production modelée, peuvent porter un décor peint. Celui-ci est en tous points comparable aux décors connus sur les autres récipients, mais présente néanmoins des particularités qui indiquent une corrélation entre la technique de montage et les décors

²² Ces résultats sont conformes à ceux obtenus par A. Dupont-Delaleuf (2010 : 51) dans une étude technologique diachronique de la céramique d'Ulug-depe. La rotation intervient dans 54 % des 386 tessons pris en compte pour l'âge du Fer ancien, avec deux cas de figure : soit le préformage du vase est effectué sans rotation et seule la finition se fait par rotation, soit le préformage et la finition recourent tous les deux à la rotation.

²³ Il est en effet probable que certains vases considérés comme tournés sur divers sites de l'âge du Fer ancien soient en réalité modelés et mis en forme par rotation, ce qui pose le problème de l'identification technologique et de la détermination entre céramique tournée et céramique modelée reprise en rotation. Ainsi il existe des vases aux formes identiques à ceux modelés repris en rotation de Dzharkutan, d'Ulug-depe et du site n° 999 sur les sites de Kuchuk-tepe (Askarov & Al'baum 1979 : pl. 5, 1, pl. 6 11, pl. 7, 1-3, 6, pl. 11, 14, 18), Tillja-tepe (Sarianidi 1972, fig. 20, 4, 6, 8), Jaz-depe (Masson 1959 : pl. XXIX, 10, 13) ou encore Uch-depe (Masimov & Udeumuradov 1984, fig. 6), où ils sont considérés comme tournés, ce qui demeure incertain faute d'étude technologique.

employés. Ceci est particulièrement net à Dzharkutan, où les vases ouverts de cette catégorie sont presque tous décorés par des « griffes » ou des « gouttes » (pl. 6, 1-2), motifs qu'on ne retrouve qu'exceptionnellement sur les autres vases. Quant aux vases fermés, ils portent uniquement des aplats de peinture verticaux, obliques ou plus rarement circulaires, généralement groupés deux par deux (pl. 6, 3-7). A Ulug-depe, c'est sur les poteries de cette catégorie, qui sont d'ailleurs plus fréquemment peintes que les autres, que l'on observe le plus de motifs de triangles, mais surtout les frises aux compositions les plus complexes et au tracé le plus fin (pl. 6, 8-14). Ces vases se distinguent donc du reste de l'assemblage tant par le choix de la technique employée que par leur répertoire ornemental, soit qu'une signification et/ou une fonction particulière leur ait été attachée, soit qu'ils aient été réservés à une catégorie particulière de la population.

B. La céramique modelée à pâte grise

Moins répandue que la céramique modelée à pâte claire, la céramique à pâte grise est connue principalement dans les régions méridionales de l'ensemble des cultures à céramique modelée peinte (fig. 1), c'est-à-dire en Margiane à Jaz-depe (Masson 1959 : pl. XXI, XXII), Uch-depe (Masimov & Udeumuradov 1984 : fig. 4), Takhirbaj 1 (Cattani & Genito 1998 : pl. 4), Khajatla et Taip (Masimov 1982 : fig. 5) et sur le site n° 999 (Bonora & Vidale 2008 : fig. 11.14, fig. 11.16) ; à Dashly dans le piémont du Kopet Dagh (Masimov 1982 : fig. 5) ; et à Tillja-tepe en Bactriane (Sarinidi 1972 : pl. LI-LIV). Elle est également attestée en faibles proportions dans la vallée du Ferghana à Dal'verzin, où elle peut inclure des vases à pâte fine (Zadneprovskij 1962 : fig. 6) et à pâte grossière, en particulier des marmites et des braseros (Zadneprovskij 1962 : fig. 7). Sur tous les autres sites, elle ne comprend que des vases à pâte fine. Parmi les formes ouvertes, on compte des jattes à paroi évasée droite ou plus rarement carénée, ainsi que des bols à paroi verticale et des gobelets, qui pour l'essentiel reprennent des formes de vases à pâte claire, avec des particularités propres comme des moulures (pl. 7, 1-2, 4-6, 8, 10-16, 20-26, 29-33, 35-39). Les récipients fermés, tous de petites taille, sont moins variés morphologiquement bien qu'ils présentent plusieurs variantes de lèvre (pl. 7, 3, 9, 17-18, 27-28, 34). L'étude menée sur le site n° 999 montre que la céramique grise se différencie également de celle à pâte claire par l'usage d'une argile plus épurée et par un plus grand soin apporté à la fois à la

mise en forme et au traitement de surface, avec un polissage systématique (Vidale 2006 : 295). Les vases, montés au colombin, présentent le plus souvent une surface grise, mais elle peut parfois tirer vers le noir. Il semble que ces différences de cuisson aillent de pair avec des différences morphologiques : si cette céramique semble bien former un groupe à part entière sur quelques sites comme Tillja-tepe ou le site n° 999, tant par sa morphologie que par la pâte et le traitement de surface, ailleurs seule la cuisson la différencie des vases à pâte claire. Dans ce dernier cas, on peut d'ailleurs se demander s'il est totalement fondé de la distinguer de la céramique à pâte claire.

Contrairement aux vases à pâte claire, ces vases ne portent jamais de décor peint, mais ils peuvent avoir des décors incisés ou plastiques, qui ne sont connus que sur de rares sites et à chaque fois par quelques individus seulement. Les décors incisés peuvent prendre la forme de lignes horizontales à Jaz-depe (Masson 1959 : pl. XXI) et à Tillja-tepe, où elles peuvent aussi être obliques (Sarianidi 1989 : pl. L-LIV). Quant aux décors appliqués, ils sont constitués par des motifs de bandes verticales ou horizontales à Tillja-tepe (Sarianidi 1989 : pl. L, LI), ainsi que par des cordons obliques à Jaz-depe (Masson 1959 : pl. XXII) et à Uch-depe (Masimov & Udeumuradov 1984 : fig. 1).

C. La céramique tournée

Comme la céramique modelée à pâte grise, la céramique tournée n'est pas diffusée dans l'ensemble du territoire des cultures à céramique modelée peinte. On la rencontre principalement dans les cultures les plus méridionales (fig. 1), en Margiane à Jaz-depe (Masson 1959 : pl. XXIV, XXVIII, XXIX), Takhirbaj 1 (Cattani & Genito 1998 : fig. 5), Taip/Khajatl (Masimov 1982 : fig. 5), Uch-depe (Masimov 1982 : fig. 5 ; Masimov & Udeumuradov 1984 : fig. 1, fig. 6) et sur le site n° 999 (Bonora & Vidale 2008 : 162) ; dans le piémont du Kopet Dagh à Garaoj-depe (Gutlyev 1982 : fig. 3, fig. 4) et Dashly (Masimov 1982 : fig. 5 ; Pilipko 1986 : 9) ; sur le cours moyen de l'Amu-darya à Odej-depe (Pilipko 1979 : fig. 5) ; en Bactriane méridionale à Tillja-tepe (Sarianidi 1972 : fig. 15, fig. 17, fig. 22, fig. 34) et Kumli I (Sarianidi 1989 : pl. XLVII) ; en Bactriane septentrionale orientale à Kuchuk-tepe (Askarov & Al'baum 1979 : pl. 3, pl. 4, pl. 10 ; pl. 11 ; Shajdullaev 2002 : fig. 7-9), Kyzyl-tepe (Sagdullaev 1985 : fig. 2) et Majdatepa (Rtveladze 2007 : fig. 12 ;

Sverchkov & Boroffka 2007) ; et enfin en Sogdiane méridionale à Sangir-tepe (Lushpenko 1998 : fig. 25) et Chirakchi (Duke 1982b : fig. 1). L'abondance et la diversité morphologique de ce groupe de céramique varient selon les sites ; ainsi, c'est à Kuchuk-tepe qu'il y a le plus de formes (pl. 8, 3). Cette catégorie comprend des formes ouvertes et fermées, de qualité homogène. Les premières incluent des jattes à paroi évasée droite, convexe ou carénée, ainsi que des bols à paroi verticale droite ou carénée, et plus rarement convexe. Quant aux secondes, elles comportent une majorité de jarres de dimensions moyennes à grandes et quelques pots plus petits. A Jaz-depe (Masson 1959 : pl. XXIV), El'ken-depe (Pilipko 1991 : 72), Tillja-tepe (Sarianidi 1972 : fig. 17, 3, fig. 57, 1-2), Kuchuk-tepe (Askarov & Al'baum 1979 : pl. 11, pl. 19) ou Sangir-tepe (matériel inédit), une fine moulure peut souligner l'épaule de ces jarres (pl. 8, 1). A Sangir-tepe encore, un à trois sillons peu profonds sur l'épaule des jarres résultent du tournage mais remplissent une fonction décorative (pl. 8, 2). La pâte est compacte, beige à marron ou bien rose-rouge, généralement de couleur homogène avec parfois quelques taches plus sombres peu accentuées. Les stries de tournage sont souvent visibles bien que la surface soit généralement lissée.

Parmi les corpus que nous avons pu étudier, la production de céramique tournée se distingue des vases modelés tant morphologiquement que technologiquement, par l'absence de dégraissant et de colombins en section, par une grande régularité de la paroi qui tend à s'amincir vers le haut et par la présence de stries concentriques. Toutefois, une partie de la production céramique modelée mise en forme par rotation (cf. II.A.4) se caractérise elle aussi par sa régularité et il est fort possible que certains vases donnés comme tournés dans les publications ne le soient pas totalement.

Il existe des décors incisés de rangées de points à Uch-depe (Masimov & Udeumuradov 1984 : fig. 1) et de lignes horizontales simples ou parallèles à Jaz-depe (Masson 1959 : pl. XXIV, 1, 3, 4), site où l'on connaît également un décor appliqué d'une fine bande horizontale (Masson 1959 : pl. XXIV, 2). Les décors sont donc rares sur la céramique tournée, mais ils peuvent recourir à toutes les techniques décoratives connues pour l'âge du Fer. Les seules attestations de céramique tournée à décor peint datent de la fin de l'âge du Fer ancien à Tillja-tepe, avec des motifs similaires à ceux qui ornent la céramique modelée (Sarianidi 1989 : 33, pl. LVI).

Enfin, sur les sites où de la céramique tournée a été mise au jour en contexte stratifié, sa part augmente significativement vers la fin de la période, pouvant alors constituer 15 à 20 % des assemblages, comme

à Jaz-depe (Masson 1959 : 35), à Kuchuk-tepe (Askarov & Al'baum 1979 : 32-33), à Tillja-tepe (Sarianidi 1989 : 25), tandis que de nouvelles formes apparaissent.

III. Les conditions de production

Bien qu'ils soient diffusés sur les mêmes sites, ces divers groupes de céramique ne semblent pas avoir été produits dans les mêmes conditions si on les considère à l'échelle macro-régionale, autant qu'on puisse en juger en nous basant sur la seule poterie et en l'absence de découverte de tout lieu de production.

La majeure partie des vases modelés à pâte claire, principalement dans les cultures les plus septentrionales, présentent en surface des taches de cuisson plus ou moins prononcées, taches qui « se produisent fréquemment lorsque l'atmosphère chargée d'oxygène circule difficilement parmi les poteries, en particulier lorsque celles-ci sont en contact direct avec le combustible » (Balfet, Fauvet-Berthelot & Monzon 1989 : 67). Ces caractéristiques indiquent vraisemblablement une cuisson en tas en aire ouverte ou bien en puits, le combustible étant disposé par-dessus et autour des pièces de poterie, en contact direct avec celles-ci. Pour cette raison, l'oxydation est parfois incomplète, et un certain nombre de tessons à pâte claire ont le cœur plus foncé. Ceci, conjointement à l'hétérogénéité des assemblages céramiques (Hirshman *et al.* 2010) entre sites, mais aussi parfois sur un même site, tend donc à indiquer une production domestique non spécialisée, probablement dans un cadre familial, avec une cuisson ponctuelle d'un petit nombre de vases. Des ratés de cuisson ont ainsi été découverts en contexte domestique sur divers sites parmi l'ensemble des cultures à céramique peinte. De nombreux tessons percés à des fins de réparation pourraient d'ailleurs indiquer une volonté d'utiliser plus longtemps certains vases, dans un contexte de production limitée et de cuissons espacées. En effet, le façonnage au colombin peut être une production non spécialisée, puisqu'il ne nécessite qu'une durée d'apprentissage réduite et une habileté technique faible (Roux & Corbetta 1990 : 78). Néanmoins, G. L. Bonora et M. Vidale (2008 : 180) ont observé sur le site n° 999 en Margiane que la céramique modelée à pâte grise nécessite un investissement en temps et en travail supérieur à la céramique à pâte claire, par des techniques de façonnage impliquant des colombins plus fins comme par un traitement

de surface plus poussé. Quant à la technique du moulage sur un support convexe, même associée à du modelage, elle nécessite une dextérité encore plus faible, et à ce titre s'inscrit également dans un contexte de production domestique.

Au contraire, la maîtrise technique de l'usage du tour de potier attestée sur plusieurs établissements « nécessite le développement de capacités spécifiques qui sont longues et difficiles à acquérir » et qui supposent un investissement en temps important (Roux & Corbetta 1990 : 103), et la céramique tournée peut donc être considérée comme une production spécialisée. Il en va de même pour la céramique modelée mise en forme par rotation puisque « l'attribut 'production spécialisée' accordé aux récipients tournés sur motte est également recevable pour les récipients élaborés au tour, considérant l'identité des compétences spécifiques mises en jeu dans les deux modes de façonnage » (Roux 1994 : 57), bien que le degré d'habileté ne soit pas le même. On peut donc en inférer l'existence de potiers spécialisés, à l'exclusion ou non de toute autre activité. Ces potiers ne prenaient qu'une part modeste à la production générale car il n'existe pas de véritables signes de standardisation, en dépit de l'existence d'une certaine homogénéisation morphologique et technologique dans des cas localisés, comme les vases à profil en « S » d'Ulug-depe, d'El'ken-depe ou du site n° 999. On peut donc supposer soit que ces individus étaient capables de maîtriser plusieurs techniques et de passer de l'une à l'autre selon les besoins et selon un certain degré de corrélation entre la technique mise en œuvre et la morphologie du vase, soit qu'ils ne réalisaient que la céramique nécessitant l'usage de la rotation, tandis que la céramique plus commune aurait été faite par d'autres dans un contexte domestique.

L'analyse croisée des différents types de production à l'échelle macro-régionale permet donc de distinguer différentes catégories de producteurs, mais elle ne permet pas d'inférer des identités sociales à partir de ces groupes techniques (Roux & Courty 2005). Peut-être le choix de la technique employé était-il également dépendant des questions de statut social, comme le suggère par exemple M. Vidale (2006 : 296) à propos du site n° 999, où des pots et des jarres aux formes identiques peuvent être réalisés selon différentes techniques et différents types de pâtes, de même qu'à Ulug-depe et Dzharkutan. On peut ainsi supposer que les vases à profil en « S » occupaient une fonction ou un statut particulier, nécessitant que des habiletés spécifiques leur soient réservées. Plusieurs techniques peuvent

donc coexister, avec des associations propres à chaque site, comme à Koktepe ou Tujabuguz (céramique modelée à pâte claire, céramique moulée sur un support convexe), à Dzharkutan (céramique modelée à pâte claire, céramique moulée sur un support convexe et céramique reprise en rotation), à Kuchuk-tepe (céramique modelée à pâte claire, céramique moulée sur un support convexe et céramique tournée), à Ulug-depe (céramique modelée à pâte claire, céramique reprise en rotation), à Jaz-depe (céramique modelée à pâte claire, céramique modelée à pâte grise, céramique tournée) ou sur le site n° 999 (céramique modelée à pâte claire, céramique modelée à pâte grise, céramique reprise en rotation, céramique tournée), pour ne prendre que quelques exemples.

Très peu d'éléments sont disponibles sur les conditions de cuisson, mais les deux seuls fours de potier qui ont été fouillés montrent que tous les types de productions céramiques étaient cuits ensembles. Ainsi, un four a été mis au jour sur le site n° 999 en Margiane par M. Vidale et G.L. Bonora (Vidale 2006 ; Bonora & Vidale 2008), tandis que 15 à 20 fours supplémentaires seraient présents sur le site²⁴. Il est constitué par une chambre de combustion basse, qui s'enfonçait probablement en partie dans la terre, structurée par un pilier central soutenant une structure en étoile sur laquelle repose une sole mobile constituée de dalles d'argile perforées, et par une chambre de cuisson supérieure. Les tessons découverts appartiennent à tous les types de vases attestés sur le site. Un four architecturalement comparable à celui-ci a été découvert à El'ken-depe, dans le piémont du Kopet Dag (Pilipko 1991). Là aussi, la céramique découverte à l'intérieur est représentative de celle mise au jour dans l'établissement : elle est pour un tiers environ tournée et parmi la céramique modelée, on trouve aussi bien des vases fins et peints, notamment des petits pots, que des marmites (Pilipko 1991 : 71-72).

Sur le site n° 999, aucune trace d'habitat n'a pu être découverte, et rien ne permet de dire si le site était occupé de façon permanente ou saisonnière (Bonora & Vidale 2008 : 190). Quant au four d'El'ken-depe, il se trouve à 1 km à l'extérieur du mur d'enceinte (Pilipko 1991). Ces éléments, bien que limités, permettent de se demander s'il ne s'agit pas là d'un indice de l'existence de zones artisanales spécialisées, situées un peu à l'écart de l'habitat.

²⁴ Également en Margiane, un autre four daté de l'âge du Fer ancien a été repéré en prospection sur le site n° 239, mais non fouillé (Gubaev, Koshelenko & Tosi 1998 : 224).

IV. Une analyse des répartitions à l'échelle macro-régionale

Les cultures à céramique modelée peinte sont donc caractérisées par un assemblage céramique varié, auquel leur dénomination trop réductrice ne rend pas justice. En effet, plusieurs techniques de façonnage coexistent avec plusieurs techniques décoratives, pouvant être combinées de manière originale selon les sites. S'agit-il d'une simple coexistence des productions ou bien de l'indice d'une coexistence de différents producteurs, et dans ce dernier cas, la variabilité technologique renvoie-t-elle à des choix socio-culturels ou bien à des pratiques ethniques ? En effet, les importantes variations observées au sein de ces cultures dans les conditions de production, la technologie employée, la morphologie ou encore le style ne sont pas aléatoires. Au contraire, une majorité d'entre elles constituent des critères culturels discriminants si on les considère à l'échelle régionale de l'Asie centrale (fig. 6-7).

Ainsi en ce qui concerne les techniques de façonnage (fig. 7), le moulage sur un support convexe est répandu dans les zones les plus septentrionales, c'est-à-dire la vallée du Ferghana, le Chach, l'Ustrushana, la Sogdiane septentrionale. A l'inverse, la rotation, soit en finition de vases modelés, soit seule, est connue dans les régions les plus méridionales, dans le piémont du Kopet Dag, en Margiane, dans le Khorasan, en Bactriane méridionale et en Bactriane septentrionale orientale. Il n'y a que dans le sud de l'Ouzbékistan en Sogdiane méridionale et en Bactriane septentrionale occidentale que les deux techniques coexistent.

Du point de vue de la morphologie, c'est dans les zones les plus septentrionales que l'on trouve le plus de marmites grossières, et en particulier ce sont les seules où existent des marmites à bec tubulaire (fig. 7). Elles sont répandues dans la vallée du Ferghana, le Chach, l'Ustrushana, la Sogdiane septentrionale et méridionale et la Bactriane méridionale. Dans ces régions, bien que ce ne soit pas systématique, les vases ont majoritairement un fond rond. La variété morphologique est faible à moyenne, avec une moyenne de 5 à 25 catégories morphologiques différentes selon les sites (fig. 6). Les marmites à bec sont par contre totalement absentes des autres régions, où l'on trouve des petits vases à lèvre éversée ou en « S » à paroi fine, également présents en Bactriane septentrionale occidentale (fig. 7). Dans ces régions, une majorité des vases a un fond plat ou aplati et une vingtaine à une quarantaine de types morphologiques sont répandus sur chaque site (fig. 6).

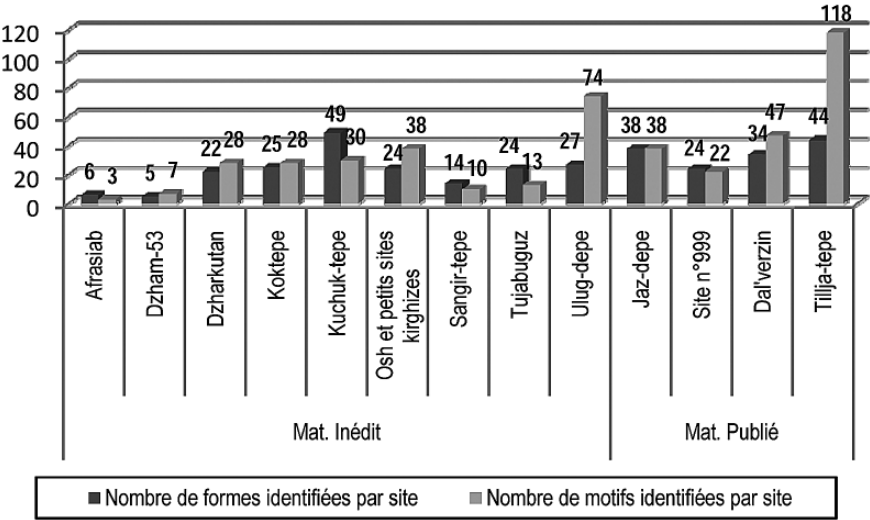


Fig. 6. Quantité de formes et de motifs attestés sur chaque site.

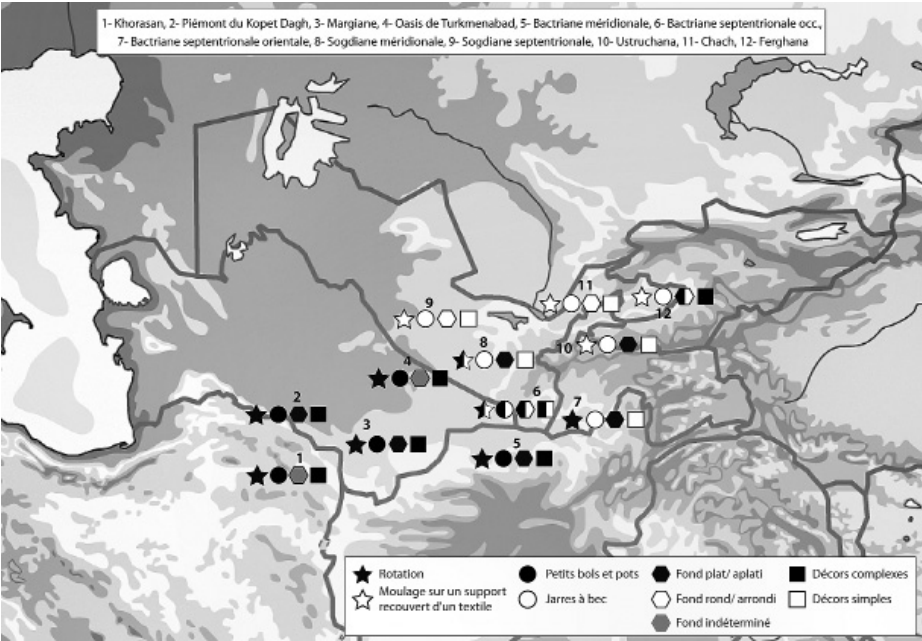


Fig. 7. Répartition de la céramique selon des critères technologiques, morphologiques et stylistiques discriminants.

Quant aux techniques décoratives, les données concernant les décors incisés et appliqués sont trop éparses pour être significatives, mais les décors peints et leur organisation s'avèrent être également un critère pertinent. Comme nous l'avons déjà mentionné, dans le Chach, l'Ustrushana, la Sogdiane septentrionale et méridionale, ainsi que pour l'essentiel en Bactriane septentrionale occidentale et orientale, les décors sont constitués par la répétition d'un seul et même motif, le plus souvent simple (fig. 7), et dont 3 à 28 types sont connus sur chaque site (fig. 6). Mais dans le piémont du Kopet Dagh, en Margiane, dans l'oasis de Turkmenabad, dans le Khorasan, en Bactriane méridionale et plus ponctuellement en Bactriane septentrionale occidentale, ainsi que dans la vallée du Ferghana, on connaît de nombreux (22 à 118) motifs peints et les décors sont formés par l'association complexe de plusieurs motifs, souvent très élaborés (fig. 6-7) ; le répertoire décoratif traduit donc une plus grande richesse.

La juxtaposition de ces données donne à voir trois provinces céramiques (fig. 7). Elles se distinguent les unes des autres par les types de vases et d'ornementation, la variété et les proportions de chaque type, les technologies employées. Dans la zone la plus méridionale, qui englobe la Margiane, le piémont du Kopet Dagh, le Khorasan, l'oasis de Turkmenabad et la Bactriane méridionale, on ne connaît pas le moulage mais on connaît la rotation, et celle-ci, ainsi que l'existence de fours sur différents sites, indique l'existence d'un groupe de potiers spécialisés. C'est la région où la variété morphologique et stylistique est la plus grande et où la production montre le plus de finesse. Dans la zone la plus septentrionale, incluant le Chach, la Sogdiane, l'Ustrushana, le tournage est inconnu, contrairement au moulage sur un support convexe, les taches de cuisson plus prononcées indiquent plutôt une cuisson en aire ouverte qu'en four, les marmites sont plus nombreuses, les formes et les décors moins variés. On peut y ajouter la culture de Chust, qui partage les mêmes traditions techniques, bien qu'elle fasse montre d'une plus grande variété stylistique et morphologique. À la croisée de ces deux ensembles se trouvent la Bactriane septentrionale qui partage avec eux des caractéristiques technologiques, morphologiques et stylistiques. Au-delà, dans tous ces ensembles, on trouve une production modelée similaire, avec des motifs peints partagés.

Cette culture matérielle originale dérive en partie des traditions de l'âge du Bronze. La technique du moulage sur un support convexe recouvert d'une pièce de tissu est connue à l'âge du Bronze dans les steppes eurasiatiques (Doumani & Frachetti 2012), en particulier dans la culture de

Sintashta-Petrovka (Gutkov 2000 : 178) et dans la culture d'Andronovo (Kuz'mina 2008 : 94 pour les sites de type Petrov, 117 pour ceux de type Alakul', 251 pour ceux de type Kozhumberdy), ainsi qu'à l'âge du Bronze final dans la vallée du Ferghana dans la culture de Kajrak-Kum (Zadneproskij 1962 : 50). Elle se prolonge dans les mêmes régions jusqu'à l'âge du Fer final, dans la culture d'Ejlatan-Aktam de la vallée du Ferghana (Korobkova 1962 : 233) et chez les populations Saka et Wusun des steppes (Gorbunova 1986 : 39). À l'âge du Bronze, elle est également connue dans la civilisation de l'Oxus, aux phases anciennes comme aux phases récentes (Hiebert 1994 : 62 ; Luneau 2010 : tabl. 9), où il pourrait également s'agir d'une influence andronovienne, ainsi que dans la culture de Vakhsh (Luneau 2010 : 390). Bien que cette technique soit également connue au Baluchistan et au Makran (Fazeli Nashli *et al.* 2010 : 98 ; Sharif & Thapar 2000 : 132, 143 ; Vandiver 1995 : 648), elle semble y être légèrement différente²⁵ et elle apparaît donc plutôt comme une caractéristique culturelle des zones à forte influence steppique ou apparentées. Les populations occupant à l'âge du Bronze les zones les plus septentrionales des cultures à céramique peinte de l'âge du Fer ancien sont encore très mal connues, mais les rares découvertes, dans la vallée du Zeravshan notamment (Avanesova 1996 : 123-124 ; Avanesova, Shajdullaev & Erkulov 2005 : 27-28) mais aussi jusqu'en Bactriane septentrionale (Avanesova, Dubova & Kufterin 2010 : 135), montrent qu'elles appartenaient culturellement à des groupes steppiques de la sphère culturelle Andronovo, qui ignoraient l'usage du tour. Il était en revanche largement répandu dans les régions les plus méridionales de l'Asie centrale, occupées par la civilisation de l'Oxus. Malgré une forte diminution des vases tournés après l'âge du Bronze, ainsi qu'un très net changement morphologique, il y a donc une continuité technologique partielle à l'âge du Fer ancien, justifiant ainsi l'appellation de « civilisation de l'Oxus de l'âge du Fer » qui a pu être donnée à ces cultures les plus méridionales (Francfort 2001 : 222). L'assemblage céramique des cultures à céramique modelée peinte traduit donc deux mouvements techno-culturels parallèles. Le premier renvoie à un lien technologique avec les cultures d'origine steppique, marquée dans le groupe le plus septentrional des cultures de l'âge du Fer ancien. Le second

²⁵ À Mehrgarh, les vases sont moulés sur l'extérieur d'un panier, laissant ainsi des empreintes sur la face interne, puis, après une courte période de séchage permettant le démoulage, une couche d'argile est ajoutée à l'intérieur du vase (Vandiver 1995 : 648).

montre une continuité technologique entre le groupe le plus méridional, où l'on maîtrise à l'âge du Fer l'usage de la rotation, et le substrat local de l'âge du Bronze. À cette tendance locale à la continuité culturelle vient s'ajouter une tendance propre à l'âge du Fer, qui apporte les éléments constitutifs de l'unité culturelle des cultures à céramique peinte, à savoir principalement l'usage majoritaire de la technique du modelage et l'existence de décors géométriques peints. Cela semble donc indiquer que ces ensembles, malgré leurs spécificités locales, étaient en contact les uns avec les autres. Le groupe le plus central des cultures à céramique modelée peinte, en Bactriane septentrionale, partage des caractéristiques technologiques, morphologiques et stylistiques avec les deux autres groupes et pourrait fort bien avoir joué un rôle intermédiaire dans le processus de diffusion culturelle. Pourtant, aucun objet mis au jour sur les sites de l'âge du Fer ancien ne peut être clairement identifié comme une importation en provenance d'une autre culture à céramique modelée peinte²⁶. De même, rien dans la production céramique, ni d'ailleurs parmi les autres artefacts, n'indique l'existence de contacts avec les régions périphériques de l'Asie centrale, contrairement à ce qui était connu auparavant.

Une différenciation d'ordre socio-économique vient se superposer à ces variantes technologiques, puisque la maîtrise du tour en particulier renvoie à une spécialisation, même partielle, de la production céramique dans la région la plus méridionale des cultures de l'âge du Fer ancien. Aucun élément n'indique une situation comparable dans la région septentrionale, où la production céramique semble être une affaire purement domestique, et où en revanche divers indices (notamment la découverte de moules, la présence de résidus métalliques et l'existence de foyers dédiés à la métallurgie) montrent que c'est la production métallurgique, beaucoup plus développée, qui pourrait être l'affaire de spécialistes (Lhuillier *et al.*, sp).

²⁶ Seuls indices de contacts éventuels, quelques tessons découverts à Tujabuguz (fig. 1), site de la culture de Burgujuk dans la région de Tashkent, sont comparables à ceux de la culture de Chust de la vallée du Ferghana (Lhuillier 2010 : fig. 129, 3). Kh. Duke, leur découvreur, considérait qu'il s'agissait d'importations (Duke 1982b : 64). Or, ces tessons sont bien morphologiquement (forme de gobelet) et stylistiquement (décor peint de croisillons) similaires à ceux de la vallée du Ferghana, mais ils en diffèrent technologiquement (épaisseur plus importante de la paroi, couleur extérieure beige marron et non rouge orangé), ce qui paraît plutôt indiquer une production locale.

V. Conclusion

Les cultures à céramique modelée peinte sont donc caractérisées par un assemblage céramique varié, au sein duquel certaines catégories sont présentes dans l'ensemble du territoire, tandis que d'autres sont plus localisées et renvoient à un héritage culturel local de l'âge du Bronze, avec la civilisation de l'Oxus d'une part et avec les cultures steppiques d'autre part. Pour cette raison, la répartition de ces cultures dessine trois groupes, chacun présentant un assemblage matériel original. Pourtant, ce vaste ensemble est bien intégré, puisque nombreux sont les points communs, qui entraînent pour la première fois dans la protohistoire centrasiatique l'homogénéisation culturelle d'un territoire aussi vaste, loin du point de vue traditionnel sur la période, qui en faisait une phase de régression culturelle et technologique. D'autres données matérielles (assemblage métallurgique et lithique), architecturales et funéraires confirment d'ailleurs ces observations (Lhuillier sp).

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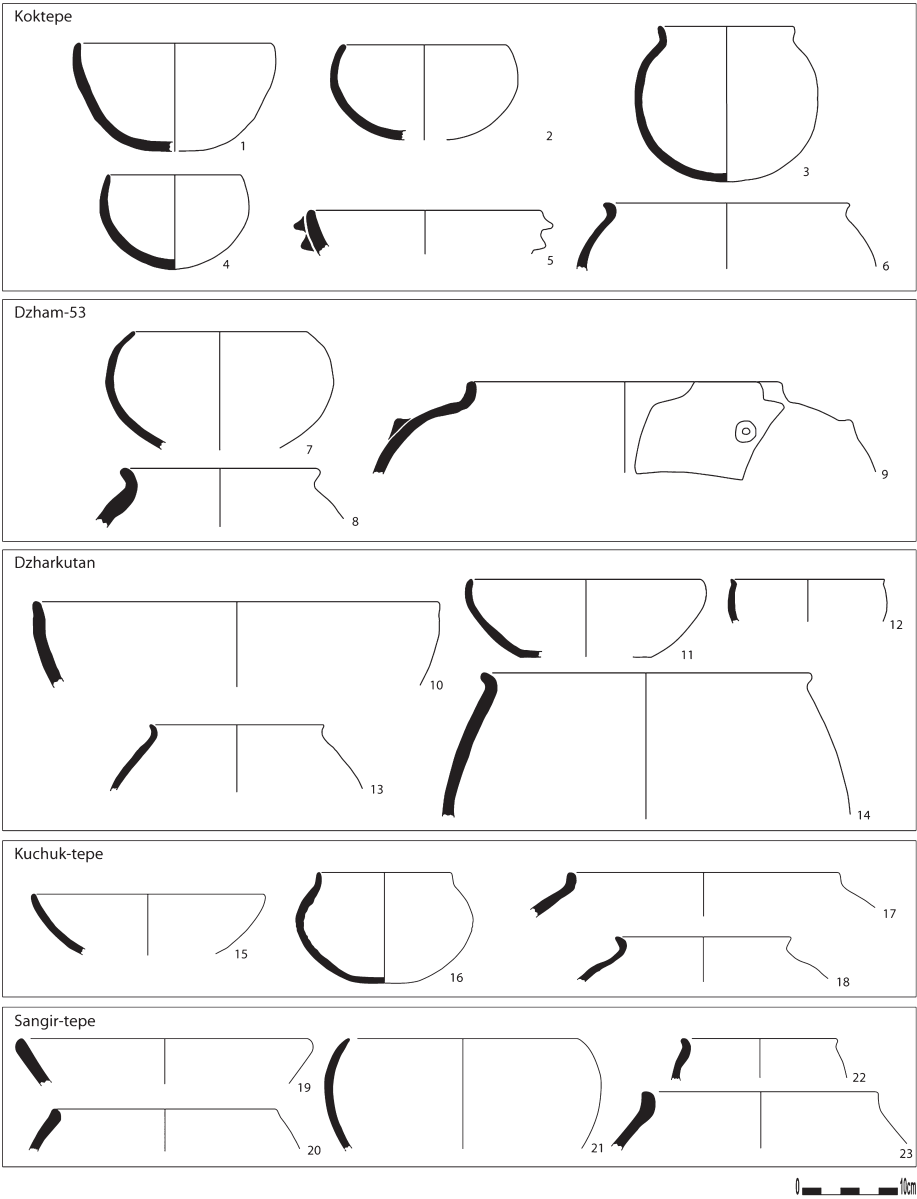
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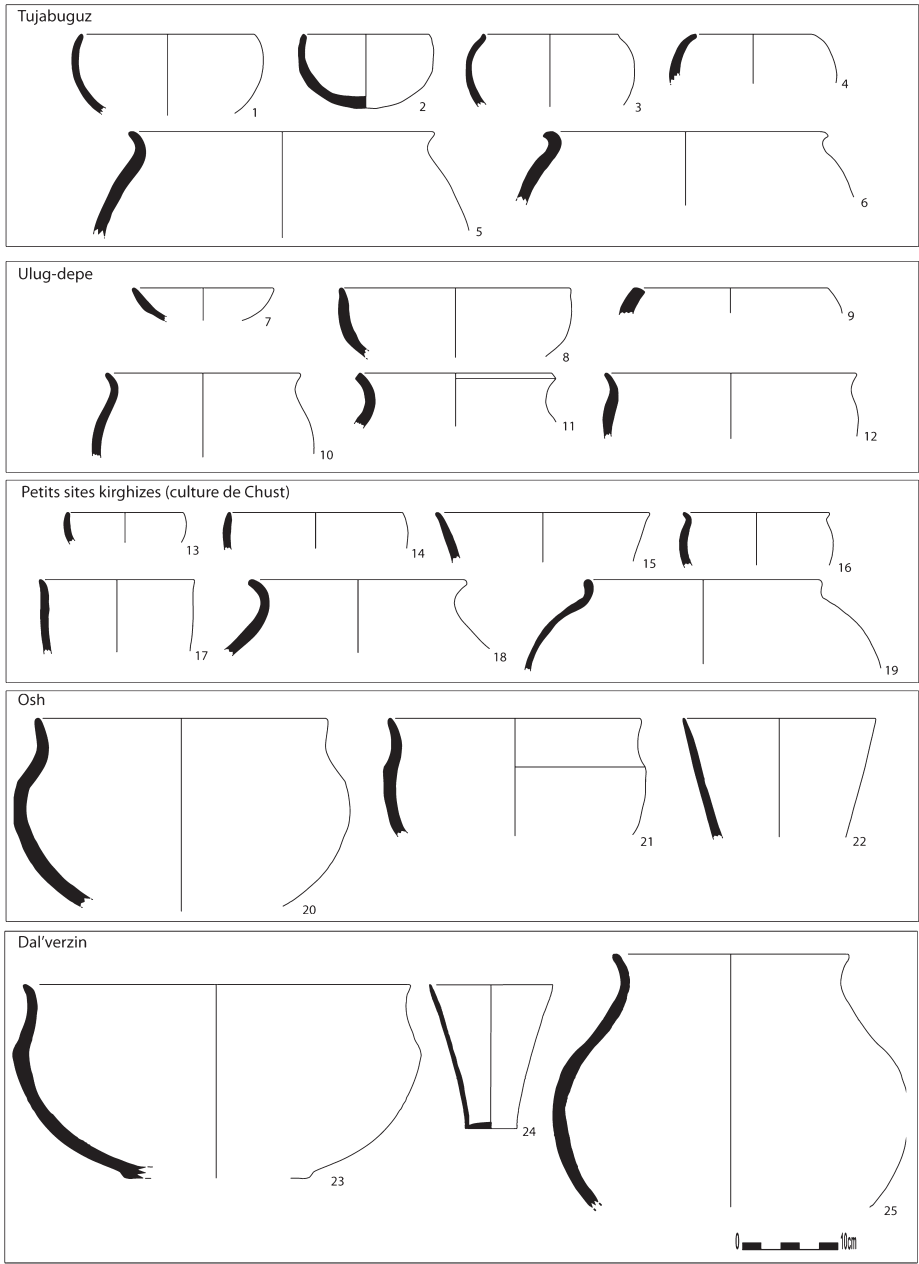
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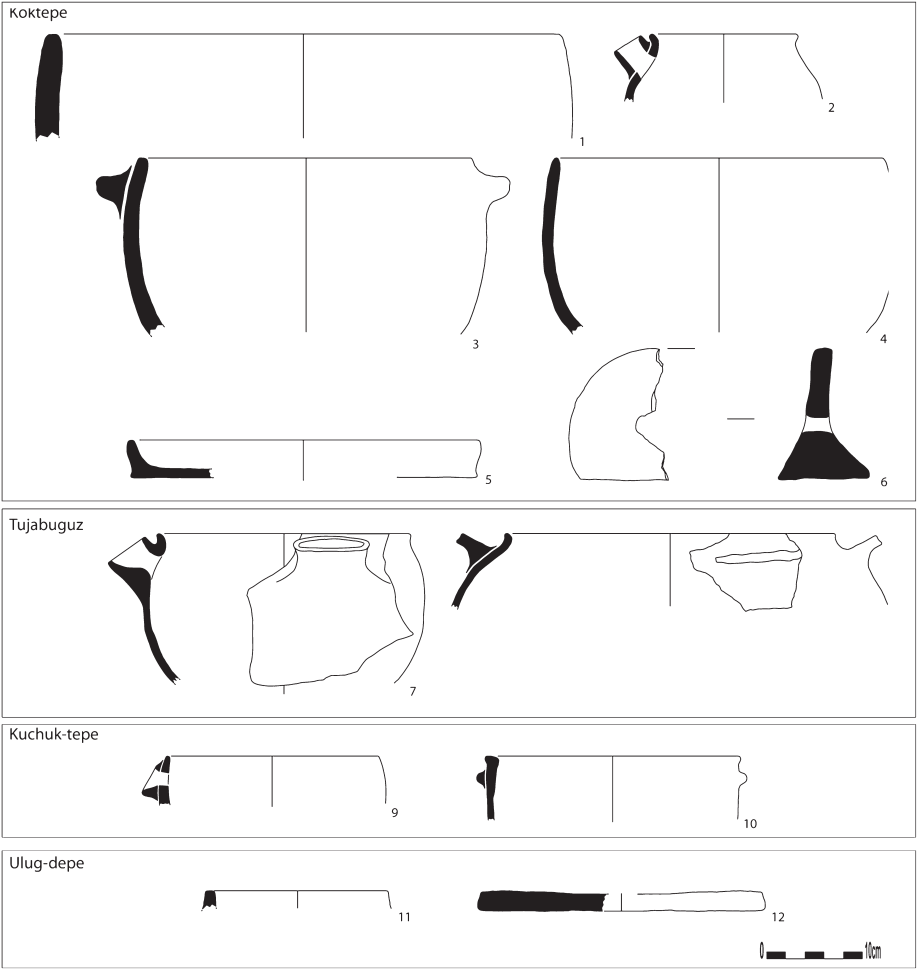
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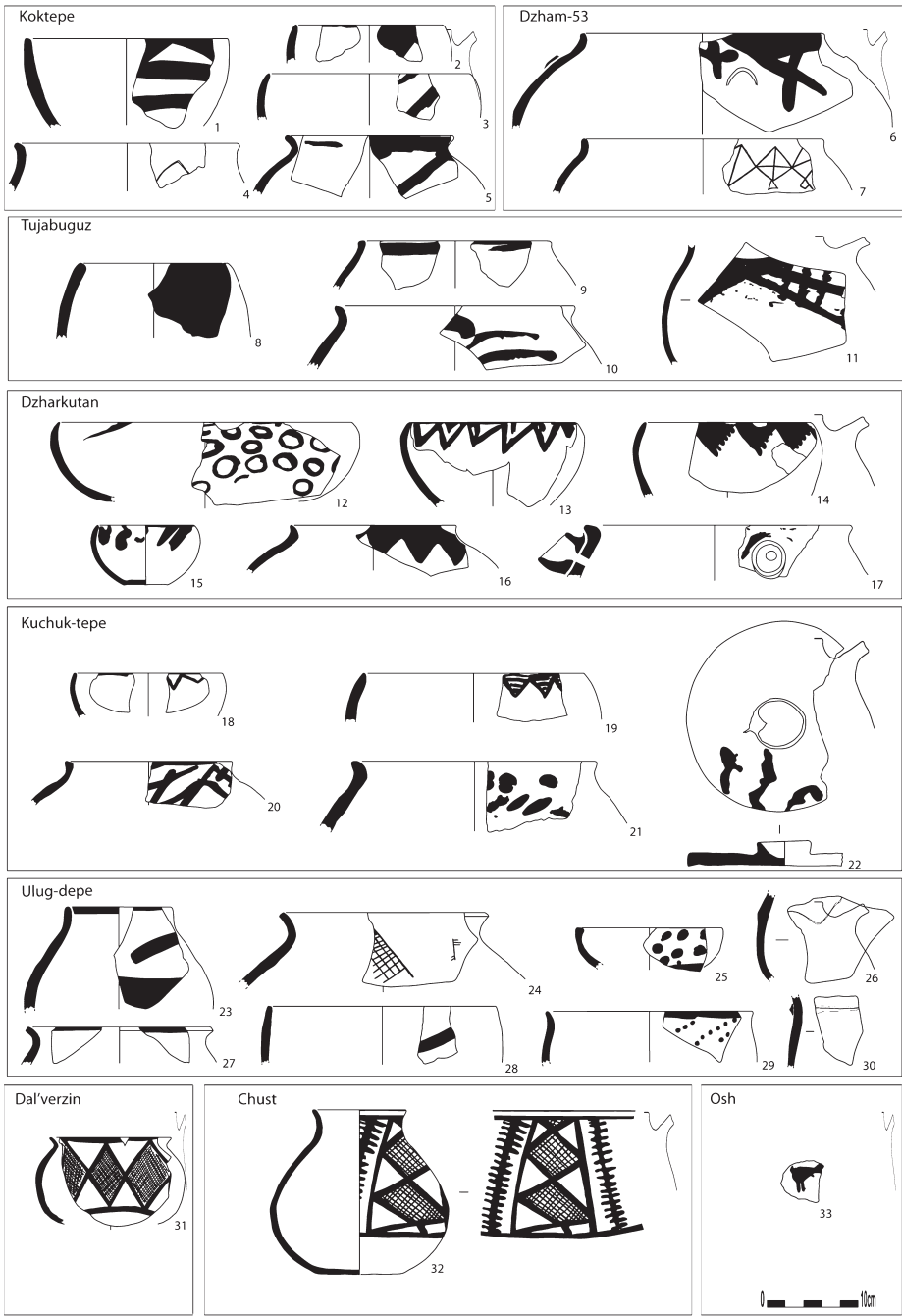
Pl. 1. Exemples de vases modelés à pâte claire fine.



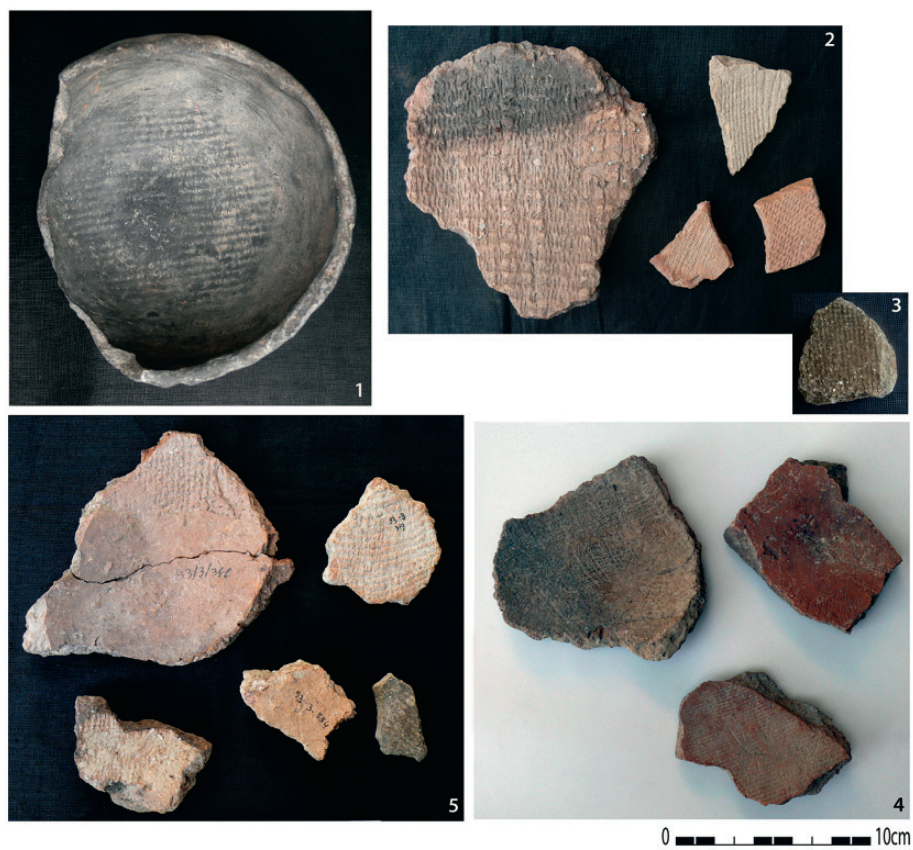
Pl. 2. Exemples de vases modelés à pâte claire fine.



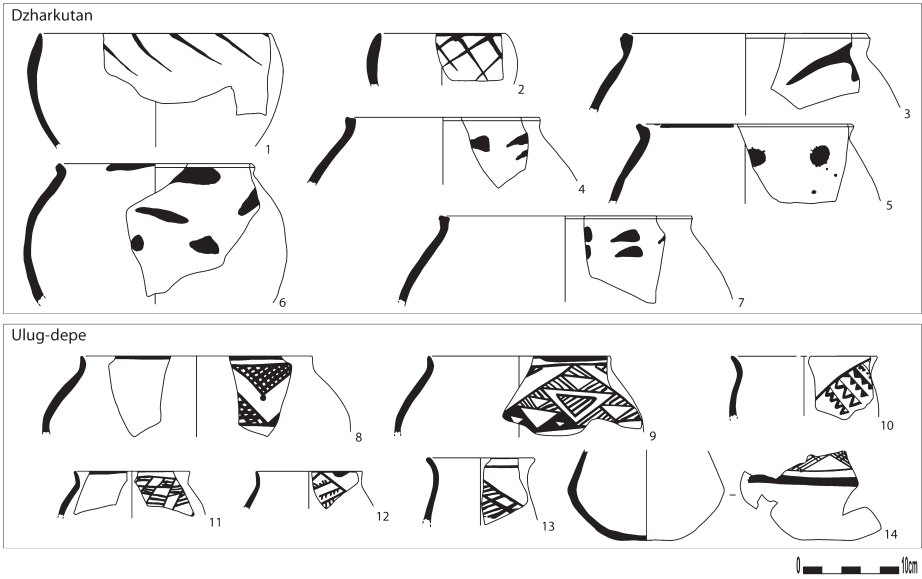
Pl. 3. Exemples de vases modelés à pâte claire grossière.



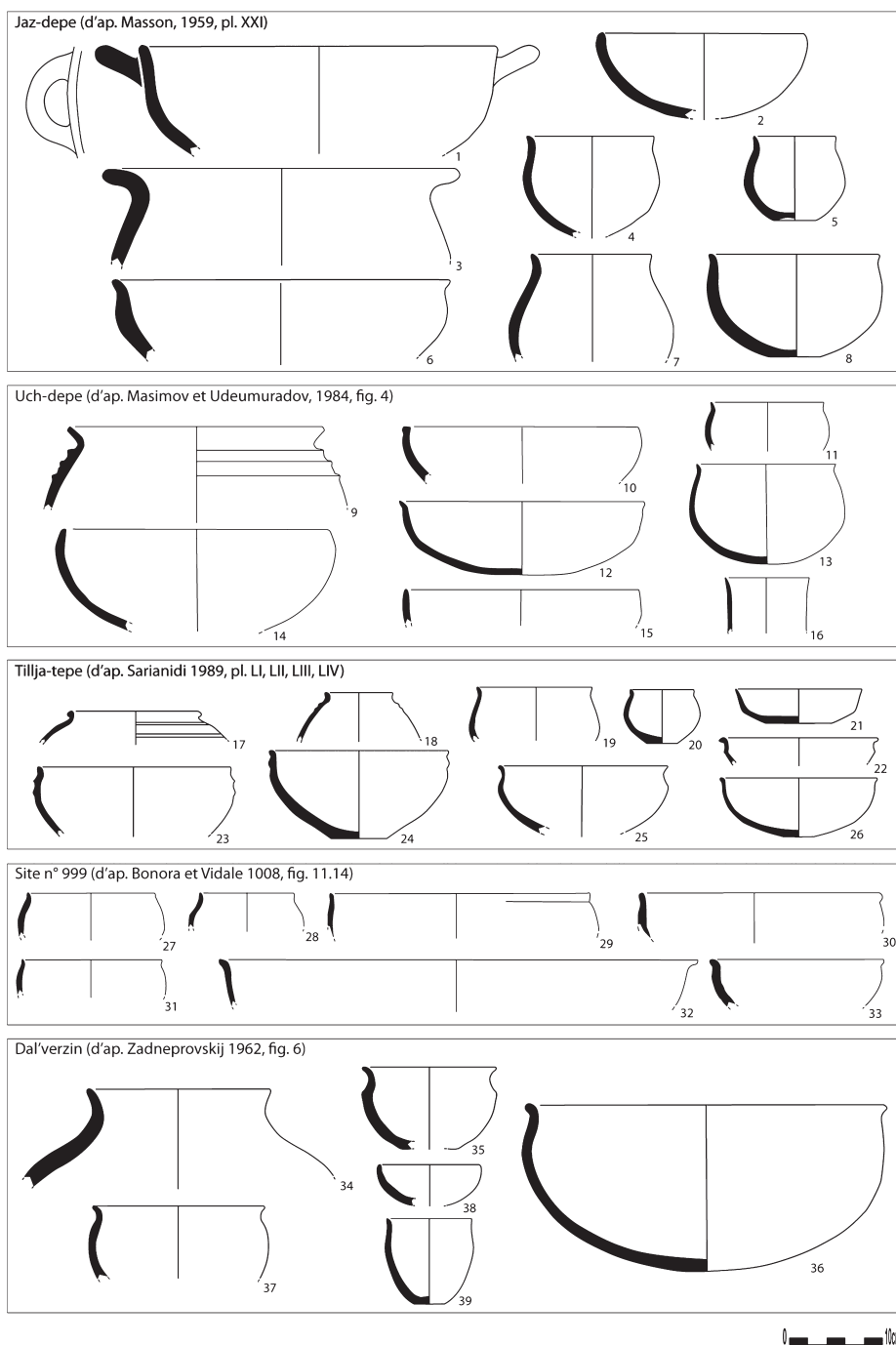
Pl. 4. Exemples de vases modelés à pâte claire fine et à décor peint, incisé et appliqué.



Pl. 5. Exemples de vases moulés sur un support convexe recouvert d'un tissu.



Pl. 6. Exemples de vases à pâte claire modelés et mis en forme par en rotation.



Pl. 7. Exemples de vases modelés à pâte grise.



Pl. 8. Exemples de vases tournés.

ARCHAEOMETALLURGICAL STUDIES ON THE BRONZE VESSELS FROM “SANGTARASHAN”, LURISTAN, W-IRAN

BY

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Abstract: In this paper, an analysis is presented of some bronze vessels from recent excavations at the first millennium BC site of Sangtarashan in eastern Luristan, Iran, according to metallography (OM), ICP-OES and SEM-EDS methods to identify alloying as well as manufacturing processes. This study provides new evidence for a better understanding of the bronze archaeometallurgy during the Iron Age in Iran. It concludes that the artifacts contain homogenous and single phase tin bronze (Cu-Sn) alloy. The Sn content in the artifacts also allowed to apply mechanical operations on the vessels without causing brittleness. Apart from tin, other elements that are classified as trace elements were present, such as zinc, iron, lead, phosphorus and arsenic. Metallographic observations indicated that the microstructures of samples are typical worked grains, composed by the mechanical process for shaping vessels throughout a cycle of cold working and annealing.

Keywords: Iran, Luristan Bronzes, Archaeometallurgy, Iron Age, Sangtarashan.

Introduction

Metallurgy of copper goes back to about ten thousand years ago in Iran: the first evidence of usage of copper for making an artifact comes from Ali Kosh, a Neolithic site in southwestern Iran, where one piece of rolled bead of native copper has been found (Moorey 1969: 132; Pigott 2004: 28) and recently dated to the late 8th/early 7th millennium BC (Thornton 2009: 308). Manufacturing of metallic artifacts continued on the Iranian Plateau

by application of different copper alloys such as arsenic copper, tin bronze and brass, respectively from 4th to 2nd millennium BC (Thornton 2007: 125-127; 2009: 309; Pigott et al 2003: 163). The first evidence for the intentional production of bronze (Cu-Sn) was observed in the “Kalleh Nissar” cemetery in Luristan, western Iran (Pigott 2004: 33; Fleming et al 2005: 37; Thornton 2009: 317).

One of the most outstanding phenomena from the Iron Age of western Iran was the extraordinary vigor of the bronze production from the Luristan region, in the unusual quantity, even for Iran, of metal based artifacts deposited in cemeteries and graves (Moorey 1982: 89; Overlaet 2005: 1). Luristan is located in the major faulting system of the western part of the Central Zagros orogeny. The Kabir Kuh (Kabir Mountain) divides it into two separate regions, Pish-i Kuh and Pusht-i Kuh (nowadays provinces of Lorestan and Ilam in Iran) (Fig. 1) (Muscarella 1988: 112-113; Overlaet 2004: 329-330). Bronze artifacts have been found in cemeteries (such as Kutal-i Gulgul, Bard-i Bal, War Kabud, and Gul Khanan Murdeh, excavated by the Belgian Archaeological Mission in Iran under supervision of the late Louis Vanden Berghe) and other excavated sites in Luristan (such as Surkh Dum) (Muscarella 1988: 114; Overlaet 2005: 1).

The Luristan Bronzes are one of the best known categories of archaeological finds in Near East archaeology (Moorey 1969 & 1982; Muscarella 1988; Fleming et al 2005; Fleming et al 2006). These include a series of decorated bronze artifacts in a specific local style, which date from the Iron Age (about 1300-650 BC: Overlaet 2004: 330; 2005: 11; 2006). There are worldwide many of these artifacts in museums, mostly known through large-scale illegal excavations that were carried out by local people since the late 1920s. The cultural context and provenance of these objects remained unreliable for a long time and the label of Luristan Bronzes is often used incorrectly -usually for commercial reasons- for bronze objects from other regions or periods (Moorey 1964: 72; Muscarella 1988: 112; Muscarella 1990: 478; Overlaet 2006).

Indeed, few bronzes from Luristan were found during controlled excavations. It is ascertained that the majority came from tombs, while pins with decorated heads have been found up to now only as ex-votes in a sanctuary (Overlaet 2006). There exist several categories of artifacts in Luristan style, such as horse gear including horse-harness trappings and horse bits with decorative cheek pieces, arms and equipment including spiked axe heads, adzes, daggers, swords, whetstone handles, quiver

plaques, jewelries such as rings, bracelets, pendants, and pins with cast or hammered sheet metal heads and idols, finials or standards placed on tubular stands (Muscarella 1990: 478; Overlaet 2006). The Luristan Bronzes are manufactured as lost wax castings as well as by forging and hammering when shaping sheet metal vessels.

The archaeometallurgical studies on bronzes objects have always been of great interest to archaeologists and other scientists. There exists some literature about the archaeometallurgy of Luristan bronze objects and their characterizations. These are based on the chemical analysis and the microscopical observation to identify their composition, microstructure and manufacturing processes (Moorey 1964; Moorey 1969; Fleming et al 2005, 2006).

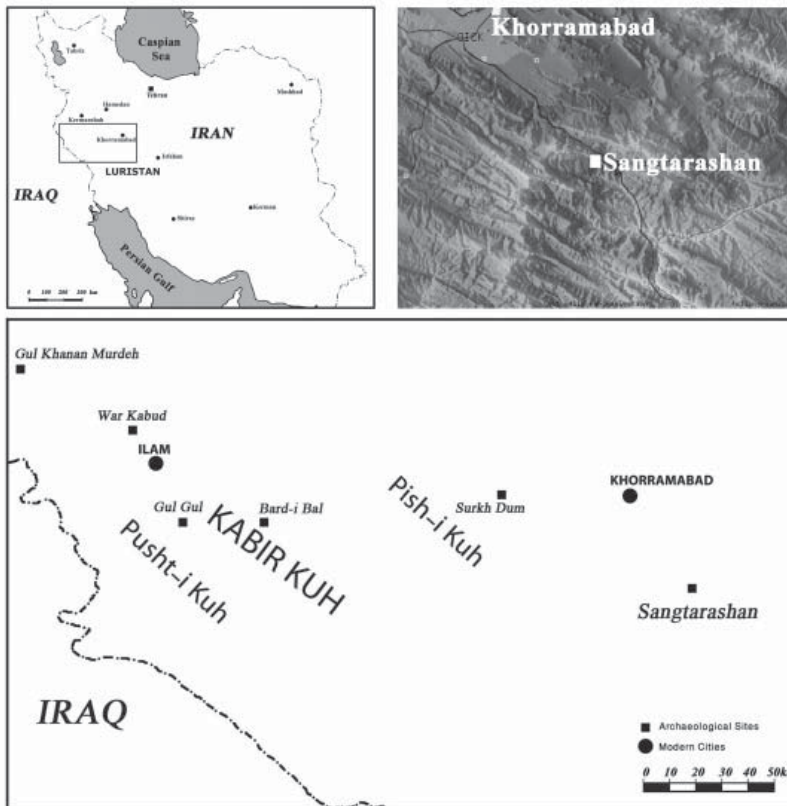


Fig. 1. The location of Sangtarashan and other Iron Age sites in Luristan.

Sangtarashan

Controlled excavations were recently carried out in Sangtarashan (Patakht-e Sangtarashan) in Luristan. The site is located at $48^{\circ}33'748''$ longitude and $33^{\circ}14'55''$ latitude, at the northern part of Sangtarashan village in the “Papi” region, 30 km southeast of Lorestan’s province capital Khorramabad (Figure 1).

The archaeological site is located in a flat farm at the southern slope of Taaf Mountain and close to the famous waterfall of Nojian. In 2003, it was found accidentally in the course of digging for water transport to the Sangtarashan village and was in 2004 recorded as No. 11221 in the List of Iranian National Monuments and Sites. Five excavation campaigns were conducted from 2006 to 2009 (Figs. 2, 3) under the supervision of Mehrdad Malekzadeh and Ata Hassanpour.

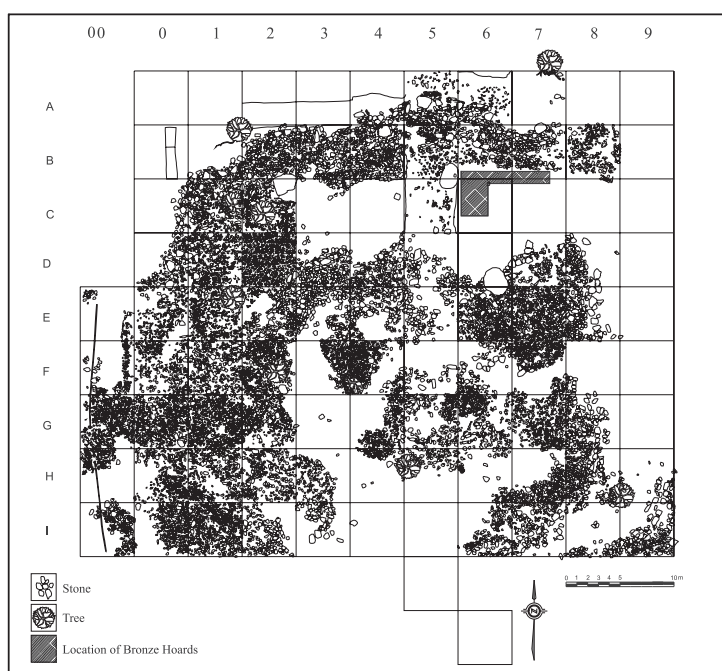


Fig. 2. Plan of the archaeological site at Sangtarashan after the 4th season of excavations. The hatched zone in the north-eastern part of site is the location of the bronze hoards discovered in the 1st excavation season. The studied samples in this investigation were found in the south and south-eastern part of the site.

About 2000 artifacts were recovered at Sangtarashan. They include vessels (Pl. 1-3), swords and daggers, axes, arrowheads, decorative and ceremonial finials, decorative plaques, some bimetallic (bronze-iron) artifacts and so on (Pl. 4). This wide variety of bronze artifacts was manufactured with a high level of technological and artistic skill. Apart from the bronzes, there are some iron, bone or stone objects and some pottery.

In different parts of the site, large quantities of stones in regular patterns were encountered just below the surface soil (Fig. 2, 3 and 4). Most of the bronze artifacts were found under or between these stones. It reminds one of another site in Luristan, Surkh Dum-i Luri, where the Holmes Expedition also found some stone architecture: a sanctuary surrounded with buildings from the Late Bronze and Iron Age (Overlaet 2003: 34-37). Hoards of artifacts, discovered underneath the floors and in the walls of the shrine, are explained as votive offerings (Overlaet, in press).



Fig. 3. View from the north after the 5th excavation season.

The mass of stones at Sangtarashan may be the remains of a dry stone (or stone with clay mortar) building or some other construction, such as terracing walls or rock fences. It can not be excluded, however, that the stone mass simply covered the deposits to retain them and eventually to secure vows associated with them. Nevertheless, the quantity and the accumulation of stones and soil rather suggests that architectural constructions once existed but a plan can at present not be recognized (Fig. 2). More field research is needed to establish the character of the setting.

In the initial stages of the excavations, many bronze artifacts were found in buried hoards (Fig. 2, 5). Some hoards consisted of different types of Luristan bronzes that were apparently randomly placed together (Fig. 5); other artifacts were found individually or as part of small groups buried in different areas of the excavated zone.

The site consists of a single layer and there is no stratigraphic sequence or layers of other periods. The bronzes suggest that the site must be dated to the west Iranian Iron Age IIA and IIB (Overlaet 2005: 8; Azarnoush and Helwing 2005: 221).

The variety of objects, the absence of a graveyard, the presence of stones covering the artifacts and the location of the site on one of the most important nomadic routes in western Iran, may suggest that this site had a ceremonial value for the Iron Age nomads and that the objects may have been dedicated as a vow. The archaeological research continues at the site and the results will be published in separate reports and papers. The present work focuses on the analysis of 9 fragmentary vessels that were discovered during the 4th and 5th excavation season in the south and south-eastern part of the site.

Laboratory Methodology

For this study 9 vessels from the 2009 excavations at Sangtarashan were selected (Fig. 6). These samples were found during the 4th and 5th season in the south and south-eastern part of the site. They were broken in a number of pieces at the time of their burial and 14 fragments were selected for analysis (Pl. 5-7). Some macroscopic as well as external characteristics are presented in Table 1.

A metallographic cross-section from each sample was prepared, mounted and polished for investigation by optical microscopy and SEM-EDS in



Fig. 4. Part of the stone mass retained in the south-east corner of the excavated area (eastern view).



Fig. 5. Some of the artifacts in situ found during the first excavation season.

unetched and etched conditions. Metallographic observations were conducted in a Leitz model Metallux 3 metallographic microscope in the Metallography Laboratory at the Razi Metallurgical Research Center, Tehran. To etch the samples, aqueous ferric chloride etchant solution was used (Scott 1991: 72). Semi-quantitative chemical analyses by SEM-EDS were carried out at the SEM laboratory, Razi Metallurgical Research Center, Tehran on mounted samples in order to observe and analyze details of the microstructure. The SEM analyses were performed in TESCAN model VEGA II, with a RONTEC backscattered electron detector (BSE) and an energy dispersive spectrometer (EDS). To determine the chemical composition the samples were analyzed using the ICP-OES method. The ICP-OES or ICP-AES (Pollard et al 2006: 57-60) is a useful and well-established analytical method for identifying the chemical composition of

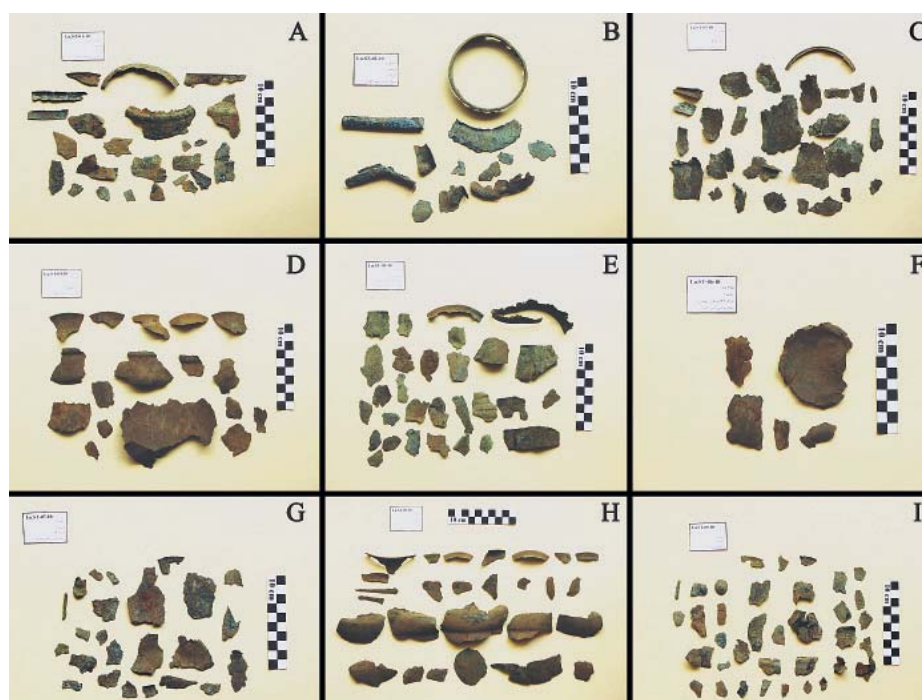
















Fig. 6. The 9 fragmentary vessels from Sangtarashan used in this study.
A: ST.01 / B: ST.02 / C: ST.03 / D: ST.04 / E: ST.05 / F: ST.06 / G: ST.07 /
H: ST.08 / I: ST.09

archaeological metal artifacts (Giumlia-Mair et al 2002: 199-200). For ICP-OES analysis, it is necessary to have a piece of 0.25 g in weight cut from each sample and cleaned from corrosion products. The ICP-OES analysis was conducted at the Zarazma Mineral Studies Company, Tehran.

Table 1. Characteristics and photos of the 14 samples taken from the 9 vessels.

Sample	Place	Wt.(gr.)	Photo	Sample	Place	Wt.(gr.)	Photo
ST.01/01	Body	10.85		ST.04/02	Body	3.74	
ST.01/02	Edge	10.24		ST.05/01	Edge	6.55	
ST.02/01	Spout	11.14		ST.06/01	base	4.56	
ST.02/02	Body	6		ST.07/01	Body	12.19	
ST.03/01	Body	26.29		ST.08/01	Body	4.29	
ST.03/02	Edge	8.31		ST.08/02	Edge	15.55	
ST.04/01	Edge	9.42		ST.09/01	Body	7.76	

Results and Discussion

Chemical Composition

The results of the quantitative chemical analysis of the 14 samples are presented in Table 2. It shows that the vessels were manufactured from a tin bronze alloy. The alloying system in these samples is based on a two constituent system consisting of Cu (85.59-93.86 w%) and Sn (5.41-12.09 w%). Other significant elements that are included are Zn: 0.45-0.52%, Pb: 0.01-0.67% and Fe: 0.05-0.12 in all samples, P: 0.19-0.71% in 13 samples and As: 0.04-0.40% in 12 samples. Other elements including Ag, Ca, Co, Ni, S and Sb were determined as trace elements and quantified lower than 0.1 w% in most samples. In general, the ICP analytical results suggest that the samples were manufactured from tin-bronze without any other major alloying elements. Other identified elements can also be characterized as impurities.

Table 2. Results of the ICP-OES analysis of the samples in wt%.

Sample	Ag	As	Ca	Co	Cu	Fe	Ni	P	Pb	S	Sb	Sn	Zn	Total
ST.01/01	0.01	0.13	0.01	0.01	91.48	0.10	0.02	0.33	0.02	0.02	0.02	5.87	0.49	98.51
ST.01/02	0.03	0.30	–	0.04	88.43	0.08	0.20	0.66	0.67	0.04	0.02	10.08	0.49	101.04
ST.02/01	0.08	–	–	–	88.76	0.08	–	0.63	0.01	0.02	–	10.57	0.47	100.62
ST.02/02	0.05	0.40	0.01	0.01	93.37	0.12	0.01	0.64	0.05	0.11	0.08	5.41	0.49	100.75
ST.03/01	0.03	0.13	0.01	0.03	90.90	0.05	0.10	0.43	0.30	0.05	–	7.32	0.47	99.82
ST.03/02	–	0.04	–	–	90.75	0.06	–	0.19	0.07	–	–	9.64	0.47	101.22
ST.04/01	0.03	0.05	0.02	0.01	85.91	0.10	0.01	0.36	0.01	0.05	–	12.09	0.45	99.09
ST.04/02	0.03	0.05	–	0.01	87.54	0.09	0.01	–	0.01	0.03	–	10.97	0.45	99.19
ST.05/01	0.02	0.30	–	0.02	93.86	0.05	0.05	0.71	0.09	0.06	0.05	7.78	0.52	103.51
ST.06/01	0.01	0.31	–	0.02	91.04	0.11	0.03	0.41	0.04	0.03	0.01	7.93	0.47	100.41
ST.07/01	0.02	0.36	0.01	0.02	87.99	0.06	0.03	0.41	0.04	0.03	0.02	8.68	0.48	98.15
ST.08/01	0.02	0.32	–	0.01	91.66	0.10	0.03	0.38	0.13	0.06	0.02	9.23	0.47	102.43
ST.08/02	0.02	0.34	–	0.01	93.84	0.11	0.03	0.23	0.15	0.08	0.03	9.52	0.47	104.82
ST.09/01	0.06	–	–	–	85.59	0.11	–	0.62	0.01	0.01	–	10.25	0.47	97.12

From a metallurgical point of view, the copper-tin (bronze) alloys can be divided into two main groups based on their tin content and the appearance of different metallic and intermetallic phases. These consist of low-tin

and high-tin bronzes (Ingo et al 2002: 337, Scott 2002, Scott 1991: 25). The first are low-tin bronzes that were used for producing common-use tools and artifacts and have a tin content about <17 wt.%. The second class includes the high-tin bronzes that contain tin from 17 to 35 wt.% (Ingo et al 2002: 337). High-tin bronze alloys have been used for artifacts such as bells, mirrors and vessels, having a silver-like highly reflecting surface after the polishing process. This alloy was in Antiquity often used across the Old World for decorative objects, for example, in the Roman Empire, China and Iran in historic times (Melikian-Chirvani 1974: 123-126, Scott 1991: 26; Ingo et al 2006: 611). Low-tin copper alloys have been the choice material for the production of metal objects in the ancient world, especially in the prehistoric periods. According to the copper-tin equilibrium diagram, this tin content caused the formation of α solid solution in the alloy, although it strongly depends on the cooling rate as well as on the amount of tin and this phase may be surrounded by a matrix of $\alpha+\delta$ eutectoid as high as about 10% of tin (Scott 2002, Paulin et al 2003: 214-215, Park et al 2009: 1268). Indeed, the main metallic phase observed in most ancient bronzes is the α -phase or copper solid solution. Other phases encountered in tin bronzes are usually intermetallic compounds that occur in high tin bronzes and are also immiscible with the copper solid solution matrix (Sidot et al 2005: 147). The α -phase is suitable to working in both cold and hot conditions, especially when the tin content is less than 10%. In metal with a tin content higher than 10%, an $\alpha+\delta$ eutectoid may form and produce embrittlement in the cast bronze (Scott 1991: 15; Park et al 2009: 1268).

According to the tin content of the analyzed samples, it is obvious that the samples were manufactured with a tin content between 5.5-12 weight percent, suitable for subsequent mechanical working to achieve the final shape. On the other hand, there is no evidence of the application of other alloying elements, especially lead (Pb). Lead has been used as an alloying admixture to ancient bronzes to improve its mechanical properties, increasing the workability of the bronze and improve the fluidity of the melted metal (Craddock 1976: 99; Ingo et al 2006: 515-516) or to reduce the cost of bronze manufacturing since tin was rare in the ancient world (Ingo et al 2006: 516). Previous archaeometallurgical investigations on Luristan bronzes carried out on artifacts from Iron Age sites such as War Kabud, Kutal-i Gulgul and Bard-i Bal, indicate that these have a low lead content (lower than 1%) especially in the case of vessels (Fleming et al 2005:

40-43, Fleming et al 2006: 35). As a matter of fact, it is clear that in the bronze metallurgy through the Iron Age in Luristan, adding lead to the Cu-Sn system appears not to have been a common practice and only in some cases we can observe a lead content higher than 1%. The small amount of lead in the composition of the Sangtarashan samples could be related to the origins of the copper extraction as well as to the composition of the original ores. Indeed, it possibly suggests that Luristan metalworkers were not adding tin to copper, but perhaps were still making alloys using Cu-Sn ores (Nezafati 2006). Also other elements (particularly Zn and As) are similar to Pb in that they can be considered as impurities in the alloy composition. In an investigation on Luristan Bronzes from the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, as reported upon by the late P.R.S. Moorey, zinc was determined in high amounts only in some of the Luristan bronzes. He considered them to be forgeries (Moorey 1964: 78-79). Arsenic is a very common element in ancient copper alloys, either as an accidental or an intentional addition (Coghlan 1975; Thornton 2009). The arsenic content in the analyzed samples indicates that it occurred accidentally and should be considered as a constituent of the smelted ore. There are some similarities in arsenic content between Sangtarashan and other Iron Age sites in Luristan (Fleming et al 2005; 2006).

Microstructure

Metallographic samples were investigated by means of an optical microscope as well as by SEM. It helps us to characterize the microstructure of the metal via high magnification (Norton 1967; Smith 1975; Scott 1991: 49-50).

Via metallography the structures of the unetched samples were seen to consist of many fine, long inclusions spread in the matrix and elongated longitudinally in the section (Fig. 7a). These inclusions are gray-green.

To reveal the microstructure in detail and also to explain the manufacturing methods, mounted samples were etched in ferric chloride ($\text{FeCl}_3 + \text{HCl}$ solution in H_2O) (Scott 1991: 72; Caron et al 2004: 778, 782) and examined under the metallographic microscope. The etched microstructures of the samples are partially similar to each other and show worked and recrystallized grains of α solid solution. Equiaxed, prismatic and twinned grains are visible at different magnifications (Fig. 7b-f). The twinned grained microstructure occurs due to hammering and annealing of cast bronze and

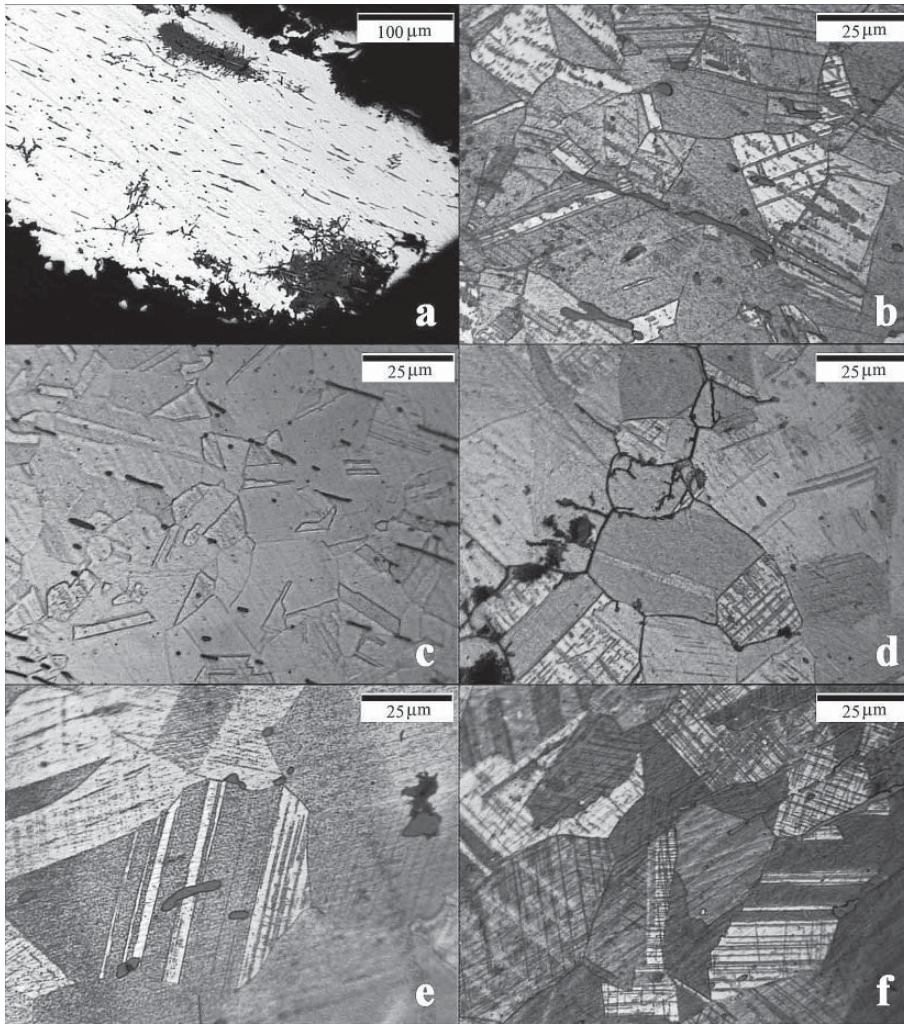


Figure 7. OM Micrograph of six samples.

- a) Sample ST.08/02, the extended inclusions are visible in the unetched matrix.
- b) Sample ST.01/01, recrystallized and twinned grains of α phase.
Note the elongated inclusions and slip lines in some grains.
- c) Sample ST.02/01, as ST.01/01 but without slip lines.
- d) Sample ST.03/02, recrystallized and twinned grains with slip lines and inclusions.
The intergranular corrosion is visible along the boundary of some grains.
- e) Sample ST.04/01, twin and slip lines in recrystallized grains.
Some inclusions are visible in the centre of the image.
- f) Sample ST.06/01, as d and e.

The microstructures of the samples share many similarities.

demonstrates that ancient metalworkers shaped the vessels by hammering as well as subsequent heat treatment, which in the case of copper alloys, is referred to as annealing. This process of hammering could have been used to shape a cast bronze ingot into a sheet metal vessel, and in the course of the mechanical working, the sheet metal was work-hardened. To remove this work-hardening, the metal was exposed to a heat between 500 and 800 °C (i.e. for copper alloys). This annealing process returns the workability to the sheet metal (Scott 1991: 7; Caron et al 2004; Siano et al 2006).

In additional samples, the slip lines can be seen along with twinning throughout the grains (Fig. 7b, d-f). This shows that the sheet metal vessels have been worked and annealed with the final operation consisting of cold working without subsequent annealing (Chiavari et al 2007: 46; Figueiredo et al 2010: 1632). Generally, it is the case that the sheet metal vessels underwent hammering and thermal annealing with in some cases cold hammering as the final operation.

It may be interpreted from the chemical and metallographic analyses of the Sangtarashan bronze vessels that, according to the phase diagram of the Cu-Sn system, the α phase would comprise the only phase in the microstructure of a bronze with up to 15% tin when a homogenizing heat treatment or annealing is carried out. This heat treatment increases the bronze's mechanical properties resulting in the absence of a brittle α phase in the final microstructure (Figueiredo et al 2009: 952).

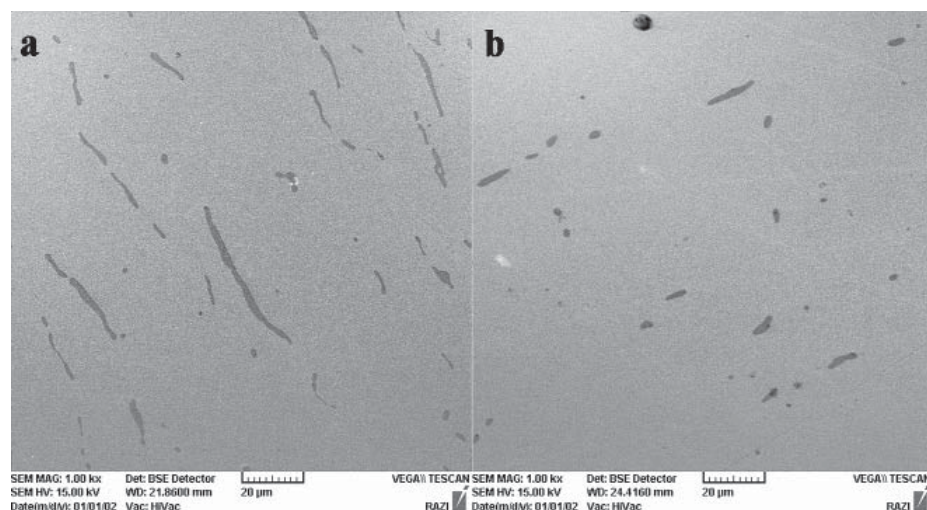


Fig. 8. SEM-BSE micrograph of samples. The microstructure includes two separate phases: an α phase matrix as well as some elongated inclusions scattered in the matrix.

a) Sample ST.05/01, b) Sample ST.04/01.

Beside metallographic investigation, the cross-sections of the samples were investigated by SEM-BSE before etching to interpret probable phases in the microstructure. The samples' microstructure, when seen in a SEM-BSE micrograph, is similar to the above metallographic results before etching and consists of a single phase metallic matrix with scattered elongated inclusions. Under BSE observation, there is no evidence for a two phase bronze matrix and show that the $\alpha+\delta$ eutectoid has not been formed in bronze microstructure (Fig. 8a-b).

Inclusions

Analytical investigation by SEM-EDS focused mainly on one inclusion in each sample to characterize their chemical composition. The SEM-EDS analysis results from all samples are presented in Table 3. Commonly, the chemical composition of these inclusions is composed of Cu, Fe, S and Sn (with the exception of two samples). Copper is the main constituent and ranges between about 70 to 86 weight %. Respectively, the amount of Fe varies between 0.44-11.67, S also 3.36-26.96 and the Sn content is about 0.52-9.52 weight %. Thus the inclusions are composed of copper and iron sulfides. Sn constituents probably belong to the bronze matrix and have no association with the inclusions' composition.

Table 3. SEM-EDS analysis results of inclusions.

Sample	Cu	Fe	S	Sn
ST.01/01	73.62	2.47	23.91	–
ST.01/02	69.85	2.30	26.96	0.89
ST.02/01	86.68	0.44	3.36	9.52
ST.02/02	75.90	2.04	21.55	0.52
ST.03/01	83.48	1.10	12.48	2.94
ST.03/02	78.03	11.67	2.00	8.30
ST.04/01	76.86	2.43	19.86	0.85
ST.04/02	82.51	1.89	7.46	8.14
ST.05/01	79.50	0.95	18.44	1.11
ST.06/01	80.06	2.04	15.13	2.78
ST.07/01	86.29	0.78	4.50	8.43
ST.08/01	79.21	2.77	15.77	2.25
ST.08/02	78.73	1.46	19.81	–
ST.09/01	74.28	3.24	20.26	2.22

Fig. 9 shows a ternary phase diagram of the Cu-Fe-S system based on the SEM-EDS analysis of the inclusions. The results suggest the probability of copper sulfide compounds as the main phases in the inclusions such as chalcocite or digenite. The proportion of Cu to S in some analytical results strongly suggests the presence of chalcocite (Cu_2S) or digenite (Cu_9S_5). With regard to the appearance of low to variable amounts of Fe in the composition, this may reflect the occurrence of iron sulfides like Pyrrhotite (Fe_{1-x}S) (Klein and Hurlbut Jr. 1999: 358-359). Indeed, the composition of these inclusions suggests that they are residues of possibly sulfidic ores (Bachmann 1982: 22; Singh and Chattopadhyay 2003: 30). Sulfidic inclusions have been observed in other Iron Age bronze artifacts from the Luristan (Fleming et al 2005; 2006) as well as in other ancient copper-base metal artifacts from archaeological excavations on the Iranian Plateau (Thornton and Lamberg-Karlovsky 2004: 54).

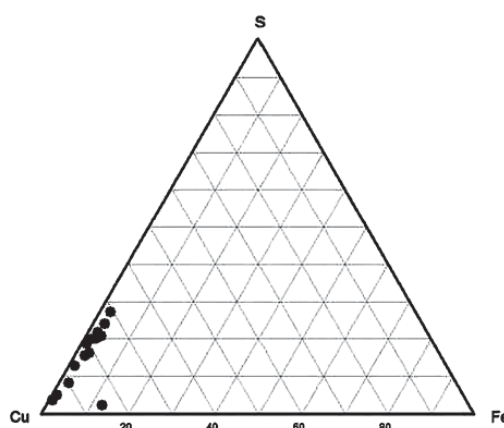


Figure 9. Ternary phase diagram of Cu-Fe-S system with respect to the chemical composition of inclusions based on SEM-EDS analysis. The main component in the composition of inclusions is copper sulfide.

Conclusion

Iron Age vessels that were excavated at Sangtarashan in Luristan are without exception manufactured from the binary bronze alloy (Cu-Sn) with a Sn content ranging between 5.41 and 12.09 weight %. The alloying pro-

cedure may have been done to obtain alloys with this general range of tin concentration, probably through a mixed ore smelting process. This may achieve a bronze alloy with an appropriate composition to facilitate forging and hammering in order to produce finely shaped vessels with thin body walls. Consequently, a distinct operational step was taken to shape the vessel. From casting a tin-bronze ingot to the hammering of the vessel sequential annealing cycles must have been applied. The final operation may have been hammering at room temperature. This can be concluded from our observation of the microstructure of samples in which recrystallized grains with twinning and slip lines are visible. Other elements such as Zn, Pb, Fe, P and As, are present in the chemical composition (<1%). Obviously, there are many inclusions in the bronze matrix which include copper sulfides as well as small quantities of iron sulfides.

The bronze manufacturing technology used in the manufacture of the vessels from Sangtarashan has many similarities with other production techniques that have been investigated at other Iron Age sites in the Luristan region. This is based on the Sn content as well as on an absence of Pb, the amount of As and the presence of a large quantity of elongated sulfidic inclusions. For example, similar metallurgical characteristics can also be observed in vessels from War Kabud as studied by Fleming et al (2005).

In conclusion, the chemical and metallographic results combined with the interesting collection of bronze artifacts from Sangtarashan and the associated material culture recovered during the archaeological excavations at this important Iron Age Site from western Iran, provide an important step forward in our understanding of bronze metallurgy in the first millennium BC in Luristan. Of course, the archaeometallurgical investigations on the bronze collection from Sangtarashan as well as other Luristan bronzes should be continued in the future to reveal different cultural and technical aspects of metalworking and technology in the Luristan region as so well revealed from the site of Sangtarashan.

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Pl. 1. Selection of bronze vessels
found during the 1st excavation season at Sangtarashan.
a. ST84 E.091; b. ST84 E.092; c. ST84 E.098;
d. ST84 E.187; e. ST84 E.090; f. ST84 E.104.



Pl. 2. Selection of bronze vessels
found during the 1st and 2nd excavation season at Sangtarashan.
a. ST85 E.315; b. ST85 E.290; c. ST84 E.127;
d. ST84 E.206; e. ST85 E.316.

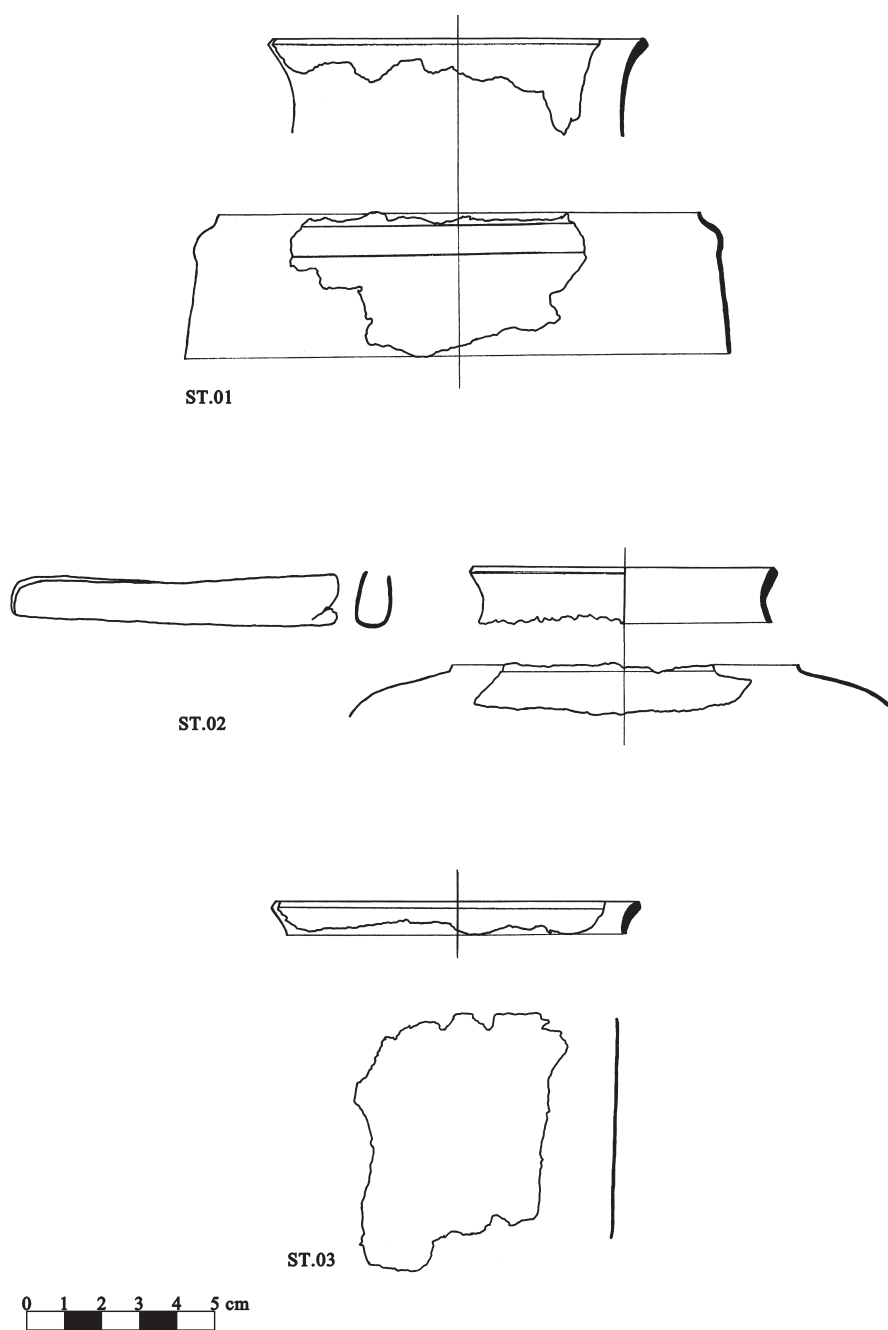


Pl. 3. Selection of bronze spouted vessels
 from the 1st excavation season at Sangtarashan.
 a. ST84 E.100, a rare specimen decorated with a human head;
 b. ST84 E.099; c. ST84 E.102; d. ST84 E.107; e. ST84 E.145.

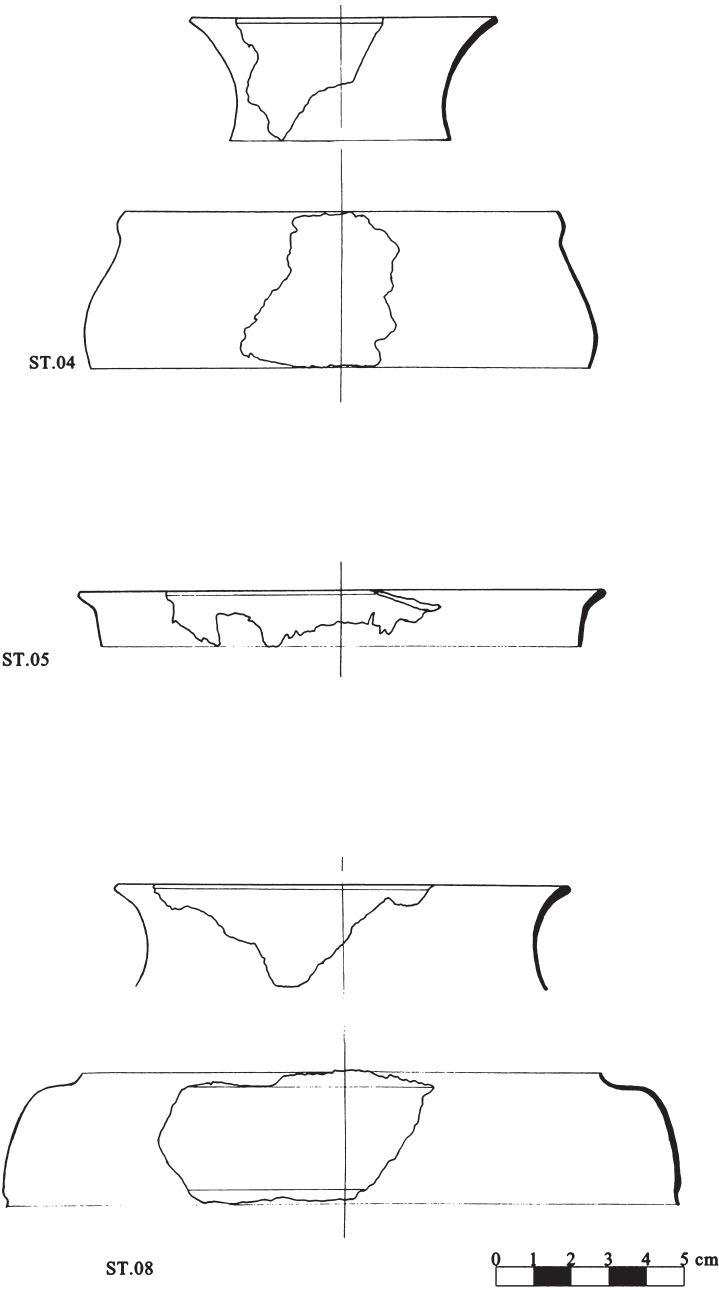


Pl. 4. Some artifacts from Sangtarashan:

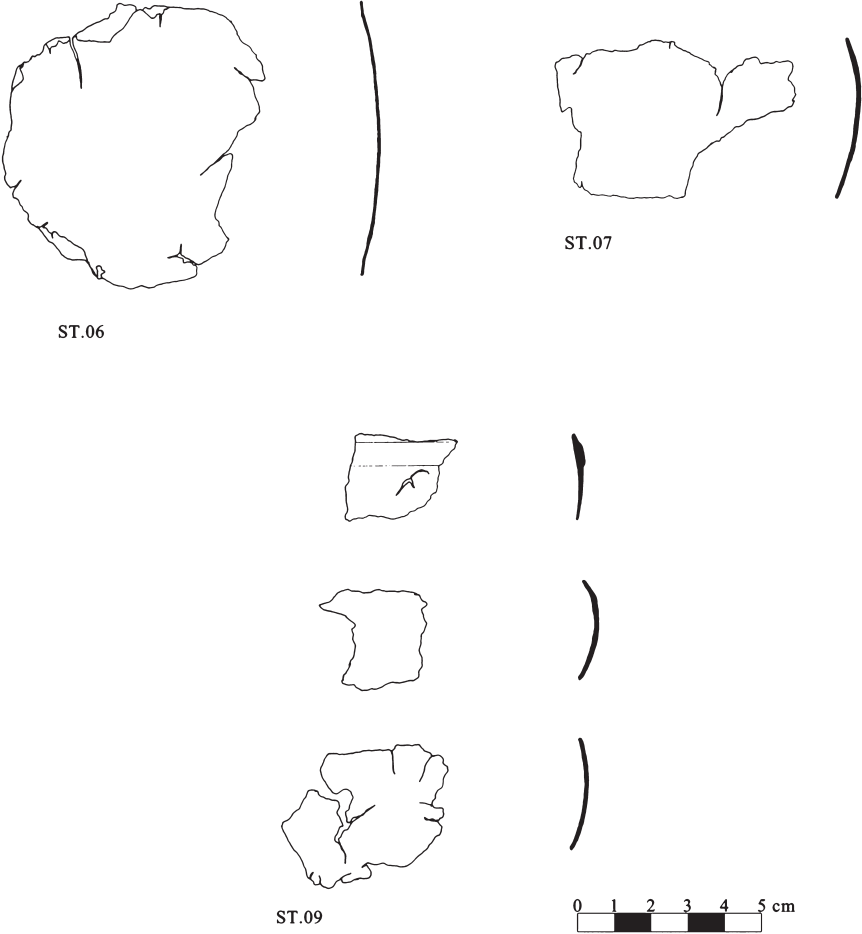
- a. ST84 E.054, a decorated axe with a reclining animal on the shaft hole and a blade with lion faces at the base;
- b. ST84 E.065, 066, 067 and 068, four spike butted axe heads;
- c. ST84 E.005, 007, 008 and 093, bronze daggers;
- d. ST84 E.095: a bronze finial with its central tube in place;
- e. ST84 E.240, a broken iron sword.



Pl. 5. Drawing of analyzed vessels from Sangtarashan:
ST.01, ST.02, ST.03 (drawn from the selected samples for analyzing).



Pl. 6. Drawing of samples ST.04, ST.05 and ST.08.



Pl. 7. Drawing of samples ST.06, ST.07 and ST.09
(the vessels cannot be reconstructed from the remaining fragments).

HASANLU PERIOD III — ANNOTATIONS AND CORRECTIONS

BY

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Abstract: Hasanlu Period IVb has remained a focus for Iranian and near eastern archaeology since excavations started half a century ago. The latter period III, attributed to the Urartian period, was never extensively researched. After getting access to the Hasanlu archives from 2007 onwards, it turned out that several assumptions, published before, were without foundation. Published architecture plans show mistakes, the “triple road system” is in fact a double building. Period III should be divided into IIIc, IIIb and IIIa. There was never a fallen Urartian fortification wall that separated period IIIb from IIIa. Two seals published as period IVb should better be assigned to period IIIb as they have no recorded archaeological context in period IVb.

Keywords: Hasanlu Period III, Urartu, Iron Age III, Triple Road System, Fortification Wall, Glyptic.

For more than twenty years, between 1956 and 1977, the University of Pennsylvania Museum carried out excavations at Hasanlu Tepe / Iran. Results and finds at Hasanlu were overwhelming from the first campaign onwards. In conducting this large scale project the director of excavations, R.H. Dyson Jr., experienced a triple pressure: field director abroad in Iran, Curator at the Museum in Philadelphia and Professor at the University of Pennsylvania. So it is not surprising that often there was only little time left, to examine the results, the notes, the photographs carefully. Only preliminary reports of a few pages were published after each campaign. Final reports were planned already after the first campaigns, but never achieved.

This resulted over the years in quite a few mistakes, misinterpretations and misunderstandings. So not all was published correctly regarding the stratigraphy of the site, the architecture, single finds and scientific data like C-14. In the same way critics from outside doubted results: this led to heated discussions over the years and to a credibility gap for Hasanlu



Fig. 1. Major Iron Age archaeological sites in NW-Iran and adjacent regions; courtesy of the Hasanlu project.

project itself (Medvedskaya 1989; Muscarella 2006; Magee 2008) that has not been resolved and will persist for years to come.

When the UPM in 2007 awarded the Dyson fellowship to me for the next academic year, I was aware of many of these problems¹. Working with all the original records it turned out that many more studies and efforts were necessary to reach satisfactory results. So the fellowship in the end was extended until 2011. What I will present here are brief remarks on the results of my work, which will be discussed in detail in my study on Hasanlu period III (at the time in preparation). In the same way Michael Danti is working on the earlier periods trying to give a more substantial basis as was done before. He is specially concerned with a reinterpretation of the early periods Hasanlu VI-IV and questions connected with C-14 dating (Magee 2008; Danti 2011; Danti in press).

¹ For help in many ways I am very grateful to R.H. Dyson Jr., Maude de Schauensee, Kimberly Leaman-Insua, Holly Pittman, Richard Hodges, Michael Danti, Karen Robinson, Hilary Gopnik, Michelle Marcus, Gabe Pizzorno and O.W. Muscarella.

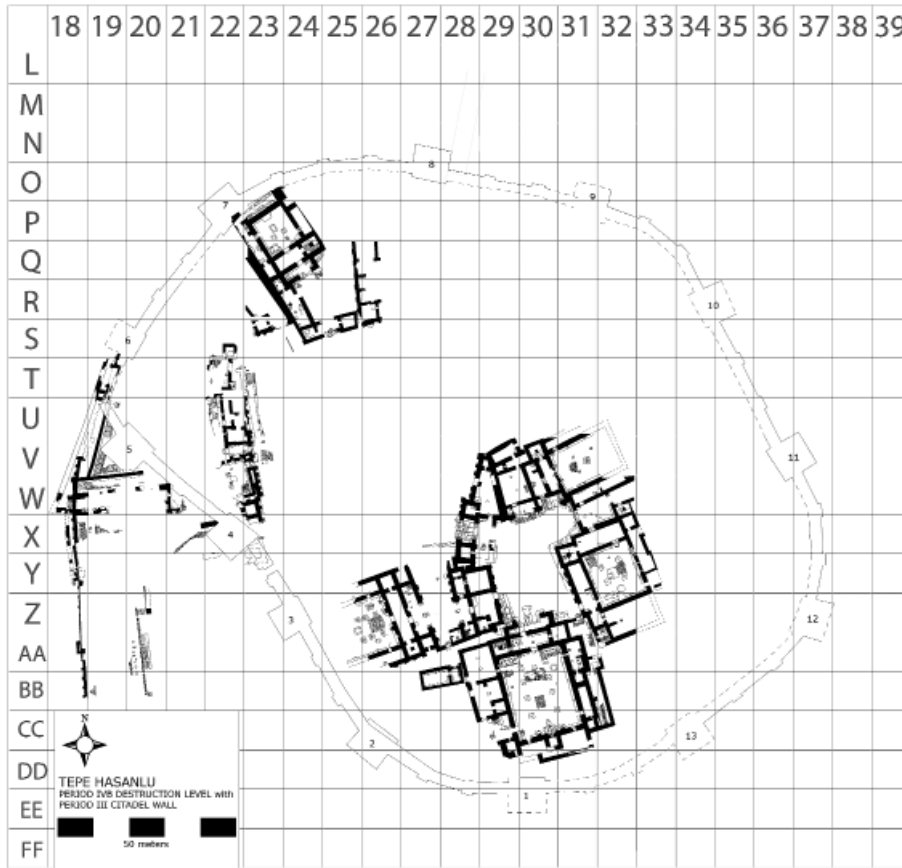


Fig. 2. Provisional plan of Hasanlu Period IVb compiled by K. Leaman. On the west slope less architecture was excavated than shown in Fig. 3, but more than on this plan (from de Schauensee 2011: XXVii); courtesy of the Hasanlu project.

Architecture (periods IVb-II)

Stratigraphy and architecture are much more complex than published in all previous reports. They were outlined by Dyson 1965 for all periods and repeated in 1977 and 1989 (Dyson 1965; Dyson 1977; Dyson 1989a, 1989b).

The reports on the architecture have posed problems over the years. In the early years architecture was published as excavated, for example BB I West in Dyson 1976: Fig. 1 or in Dyson 1980: Fig. 3. In the latter figure

it is clear what has been excavated and what was reconstructed. This way of publishing changed in 1989 when Dyson and Voigt published a special Hasanlu edition in Expedition 31 (Dyson & Voigt 1989). Suddenly BB I West was published as a complete building, in the same way BB IV East. This was already noted by Muscarella, who wrote: "Throughout the publications, incomplete or inconsistent settlement plans are illustrated, creating a source of confusion." (Muscarella 2006: 80).

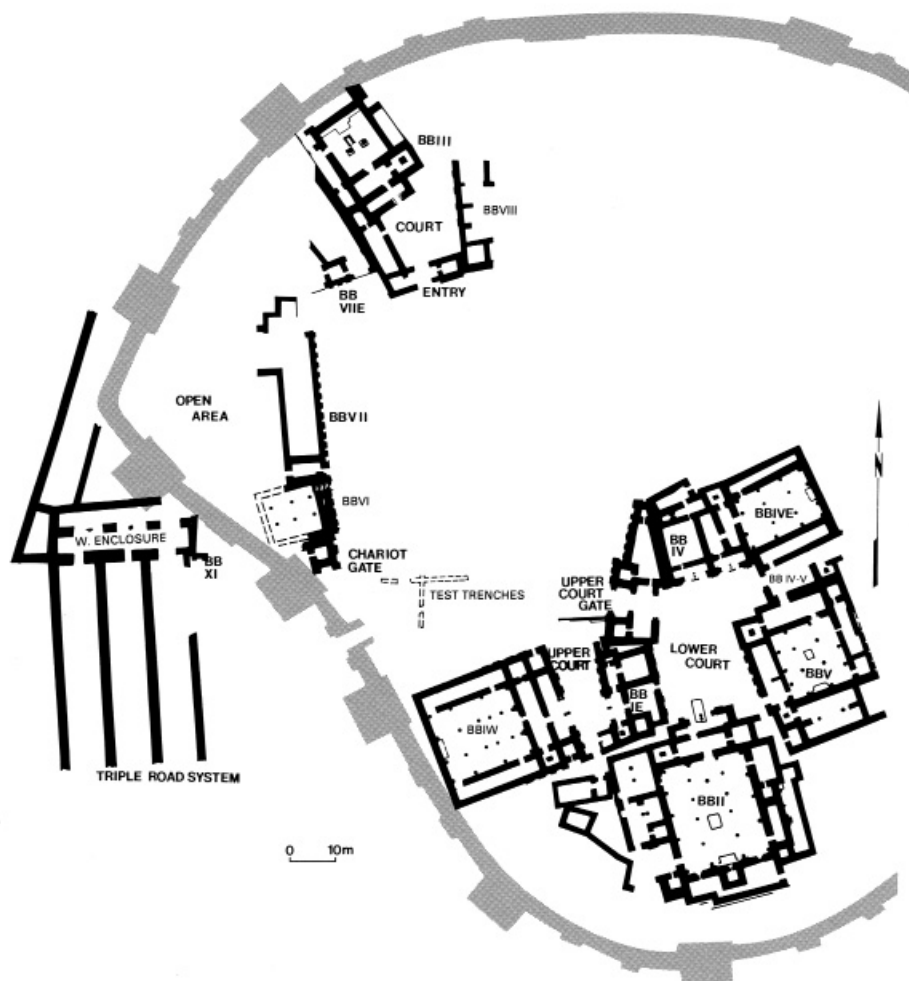


Fig. 3. Plan of Hasanlu Period IVb compiled by RHD in 1989. On the west slope, in BB IW and BB IVE more architecture than excavated is shown on this plan (from Dyson 1989a: 10, Fig. 11).

Recent work on the general plan of Hasanlu period IVb by K. Leaman was aimed at correcting old mistakes. It changed the view on the architecture in several respects, specially in the western part of the excavation. Not everything published in prior reports could be verified by her, who conducted for years research for the Hasanlu project. K. Leaman used all the original field drawings to put together a new plan. Within the limited time span she had she could not study all of the 15000 photographs and slides in detail, which were only available in digitized format from 2009 onwards. There is more information on the architecture and excavation from the photographs available than compiled in the plan in 2009. So again it is unfortunate that this new plan, published for the first time in 2011, is in many respects not correct (fig. 2), but again provisional. It is correct in taking away from the plan structures that were never excavated, but only reconstructed. But on the other hand it does not show all the excavated architecture on the so-called west slope. One example: The so-called western enclosure with its large flagstone pavement (Dyson 1975: Fig. 1) was completely excavated, as shown by Dyson's plan and many photographs in the Hasanlu archive. In Leaman's new plan one gets the impression, only small parts of the flagstone pavement were found (fig. 2: W19-20). Another example for an inconsistent plan: the distance of the rear wall of BB II to tower 1 of the Urartian fortification wall is different on both plans (compare fig. 2 to fig. 3).

The “triple road system”

A kind of manipulation is Dyson's plan of a “triple road system”, as published in 1989 (fig. 4: right). This plan contains architecture that was in fact never excavated. The “triple road system” on the west slope is neither a triple, nor a road (Kroll 2010: 25-26; Kroll 2012). It is part of a double building as first published by Dyson in 1975 (fig. 1: left). The so-called triple road as published in 1989 was mainly reconstructed, but this was nowhere mentioned in the text or on the plan. The published plan, drawn stone by stone, suggests on the opposite, that it was in fact excavated. Photographs and field plans in the Hasanlu archive show, the 1989 plan is a mere invention. Moreover in the 1989 plan the crude stone bases and a door socket in the aisle between the pavements were removed from the plan as they were not in accord with the idea of a triple road.

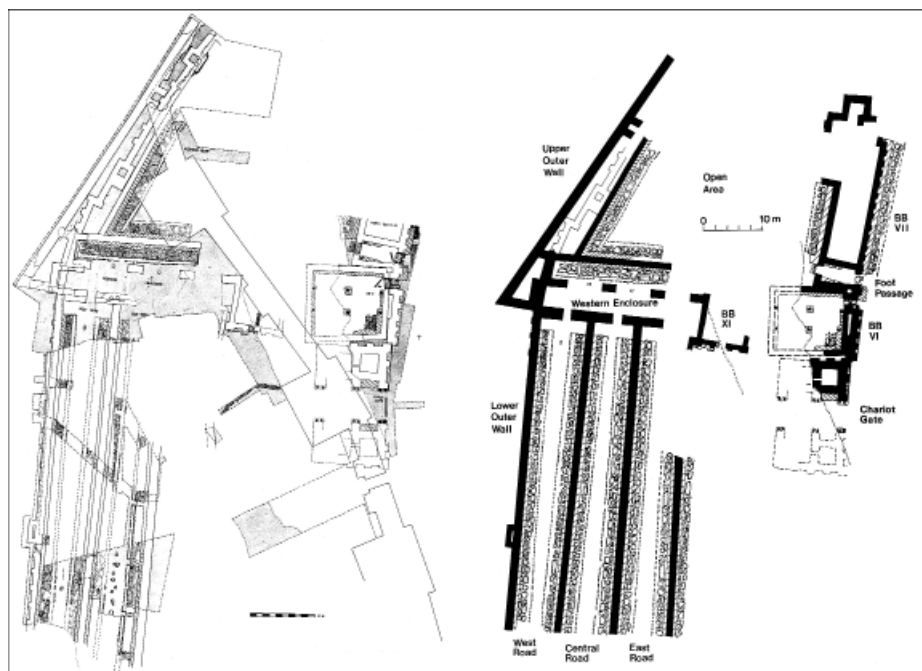


Fig. 4. Left: Hasanlu, plan of the “double roadway” after the last excavation campaign in 1974 (Dyson 1975: Fig. 1): Stone pavements in the left and right aisle, crude stone bases and a door socket in the aisle between the pavements; right: Hasanlu, plan of the “triple roadway” as published in 1989 (Dyson 1989b: 110).

Period IVa

The existence of period IVa has repeatedly been described by Dyson (Dyson 1965; 1977; 1989) and again briefly by Danti (Danti 2011: 12, Fig. 1b). Contrary to these statements, no architecture, no pottery, no finds were ever published. In the Hasanlu archive I could not find any substantial evidence for period IVa. An exception is V22. In 1974 in V22 a structure was excavated. The field supervisor John Alden called it period IIIb in field notebook 72 (1974). Later the plans drawn by Alden were relabeled as period IVa by Dyson. However, the structure found in V22 is a solid typical period IIIb structure, a paved room with an adjoining trough, a small animal stable (fig. 5). Similar structures were excavated several times in Hasanlu period IIIb (see fig. 6), at Urartian sites like Karmir Blur,



Fig. 5. Period IIIb structure in V22 (paved room with adjacent trough).
Excavated as period IIIb by J. Alden, relabeled period IVa by Dyson;
courtesy of the Hasanlu project.

Bastam or Ayanis. As Dyson understood this structure as period IVa it was not included in the 1989 plan of period IIIb (Dyson 1989a: 7, Fig. 6).

Unless the Hasanlu project can really prove a period IVa, it exists only as fancy. In this respect I only agree with the first part of the statement for the end of period IVb, recently published by M. Danti: *“Moreover, there appears to be a single episode of destruction ending the Iron II occupation of the citadel followed by sporadic and ephemeral reoccupation.”* (Danti 2011: 12, Fig. 1b).

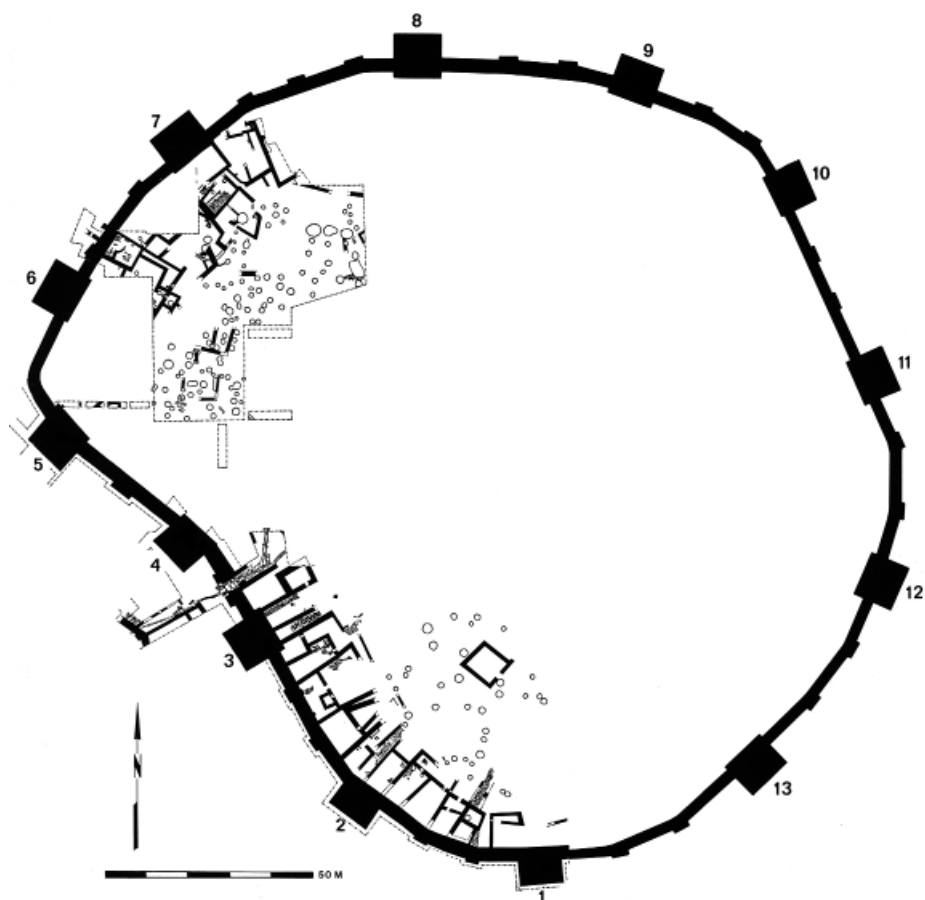


Fig. 6. Preliminary Plan of period IIIb as published in 1989 (Dyson 1989a: Fig. 6).

Period III: general remarks

Muscarella (2006) has published a substantial, generally correct resume on period III which I don't want to repeat here. I only want to add some points which escaped him or were not known to him. From the point of excavation, it is not easy to say what happened after the destruction of period IVb, as the documented stratigraphy is often difficult to interpret. At Hasanlu in great parts of the mound no clear floor levels or building periods could be observed above period IVb. The period IVb burnt level is

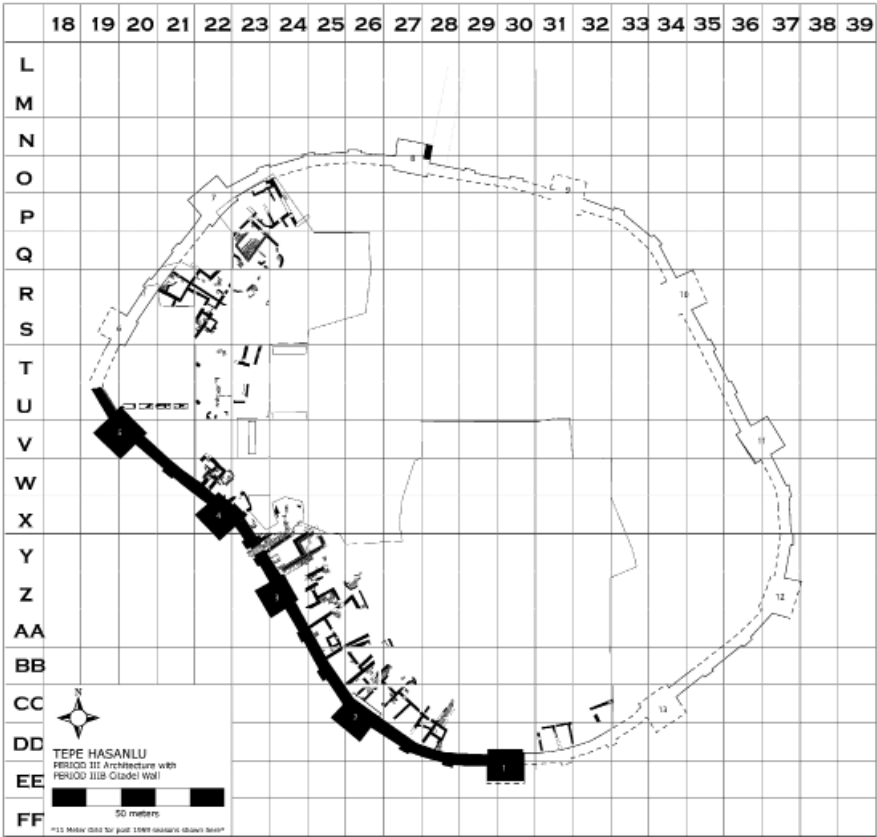


Fig. 7. Preliminary, unfinished and incomplete working plan of Hasanlu period IIIb, compiled by K. Leaman in 2011; courtesy of the Hasanlu project.

a solid level of reddish burnt brick, which can be recognized easily. But the levels above have always posed a problem. In any case the view published first in 1965 is not correct, that a “squatters’ occupation (called Hasanlu IVa) is then followed by a period of abandonment as indicated by almost a meter of erosion deposits produced by the filling in of the standing ruins” (Dyson 1965: 203). The opposite is true. The walls of period IIIb rest directly on the burnt level of period IVb. This is documented in the squares in the north-western part of the high mound (P-S 20-23), but also in the south-west.

Period III fortification wall

For period III the first (preliminary) plan was published in 1989 (Dyson 1989a: Fig. 6). This plan gives the impression the fortification wall was excavated completely: a solid drawn wall all around the mound. The documentation in the UPM shows not even half of the fortification wall was excavated: only the western part. Allegedly the eastern part was traced, but only scant evidence from field notes is available for this part of the wall. The fortification wall itself looks, as if it was never finished. In operation T19-U19 there is a weird corner, where the wall is missing (fig. 7). It looks as if here two diverging building plans clashed and then construction was terminated. The fortification wall itself cuts deeply into the period IVb destruction level as has been documented well in DD-30-31 in 1972 (see Dyson 1989a: Fig. 7; for more information see Muscarella 2006: 82-85).

Period III: IIIc, IIIb, IIIa

Originally period III was separated into 2 phases IIIb and IIIa (Dyson 1965: 204-213; Muscarella 2006: 82-83). The fortification wall clearly precedes these two phases. So the (Uartian) fortification wall, attributed since 1972 to period IIIb, should better be called period IIIc, as it was built before the period IIIb structures. All these structures were set against the fortification wall, after it had been constructed.

In a finished Uartian citadel, one would expect quite a few massive public buildings like garrison quarters, storehouses etc. Nothing has been found at Hasanlu. The small rectangular buildings found inside the fortification wall look more like a squatter occupation, just after the construction of the fortification wall was abandoned. Some flimsy structures with long pavements and troughs could have been stables for keeping animals. They are certainly not “paved alleyways” as Dyson suggested (Dyson 1977: 549)

Period IIIb Pottery

Within these scattered buildings inside the citadel wall were found some small finds and some pottery that can be attributed to Iron Age III (Uartian period). Already in 1958 in area Z26 a red slipped pouring jar with a trefoil spout was found on a small pavement (Fig 8: Has 58-390); Charles



Fig. 8. Urartian red slipped jar from operation Z26 (HAS 58-390); courtesy of the Hasanlu project.

Burney who was present in Hasanlu at this time identified it as Toprakkale Ware and Urartian. Unfortunately it was forgotten and never published. The same trefoil jars are abundant all over Urartu. They were found in great quantities at Ayanis, Karmir Blur and Bastam. In these three fortresses hundreds were found in pottery magazines. However, important is negative evidence at Hasanlu. Until now, there is no indication that the typical big Urartian storage vessels were ever in use, which are a hallmark of any Urartian site. As stated above, big building constructions inside the city wall are missing altogether. This leads one to assume that Hasanlu IIIb as a typical Urartian fortress or city was never finished. The Period IIIb levels are rarely thicker than 30 cm; often small finds and pottery only come from pits. Hardly any finds come from a floor level. Most finds were found in the fill of the period IIIb structures. The occupation must have been rather limited in time.

The “fallen fortification wall”

In 1999 Dyson published for the first time details on the stratigraphy of period IIIb and IIIa in this journal (Dyson 1999a): a long east section from operations CC28 to DD28 and EE28 (see the discussion in Muscarella 2006: 86). However, in this publication another myth was invented: the myth of the fallen Urartian fortification wall, which separated period IIIb from period IIIa. There is in fact no fallen fortification wall of period IIIb. No mud brick wall would fall for twenty and more meters afar. The fortification wall collapse published by Dyson is in fact part of a much larger brick platform of period II, laid with light yellow bricks. This is the evidence from notebooks and slides from various operations, noted by all the site supervisors in the area. This platform was laid out for the buildings of Hasanlu period II over an area of about 600-800 square meters, a small Seleucid or Parthian palace. In BB29 (operation XXXVIII) this platform was uncovered almost complete (fig. 10). Muscarella (2006: 86) could not believe that such an important marker remained unpublished for almost 40 years. And he is right. This important marker just did not exist.

After studying the Hasanlu archives it is clear this section, published for the first time only in 1999, does not reflect the excavated evidence. On the contrary, it distorts the excavated evidence. The original field drawing of the section (excavated 1960 as operation XXXVI) was manipulated in several important details. This can be seen comparing the 1999 published section with the new section K. Leaman and I compiled from the original field drawing and slides (compare fig. 9 to fig. 11). I only mention here the major changes (for details see Kroll in press).

The “bricky collapse period IIIb” in Dyson’s drawing (fig. 9) belongs in fact to period IVb, as numerous finds, typical pottery and the description by the field supervisor show. The two upright standing pots in this level are in fact inverted pots with tab handles, typical for period IVb. In Dyson’s drawing the tab handles have been removed, as they would have indicated a period IVb date. Tab handles are unknown in period III. In the Hasanlu archive 3 pots with tab handles are recorded from operation CC28 (Has-60-240, -241, -242). The so-called fallen bricks in Dyson’s drawing are drawn vertically. In fact they had been laid oblique. Contrary to Dyson’s statement in 1999 it is almost tragic that this section is not the tool at all to prove a good stratigraphic distinction between period IIIb and IIIa. Neither IIIb nor IIIa pottery was recorded in this operation. Dyson is

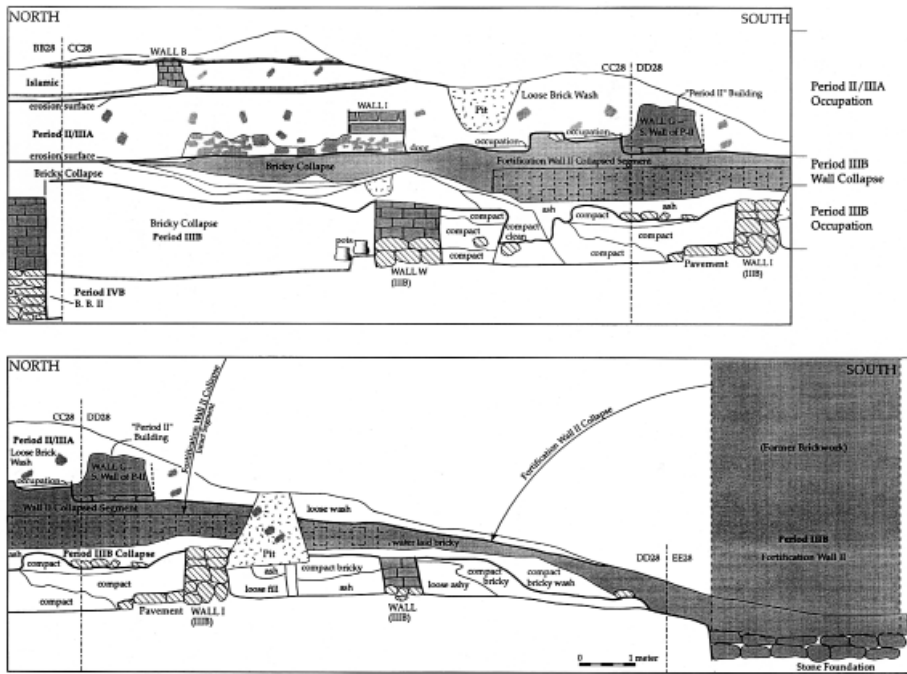


Fig. 9. The distorted eastern section in CC28-DD28-EE28 (Dyson 1999a: Fig 10).



Fig. 10. Hasanlu period II brick platform in BB29 (operation XXXVIII); courtesy of the Hasanlu project.

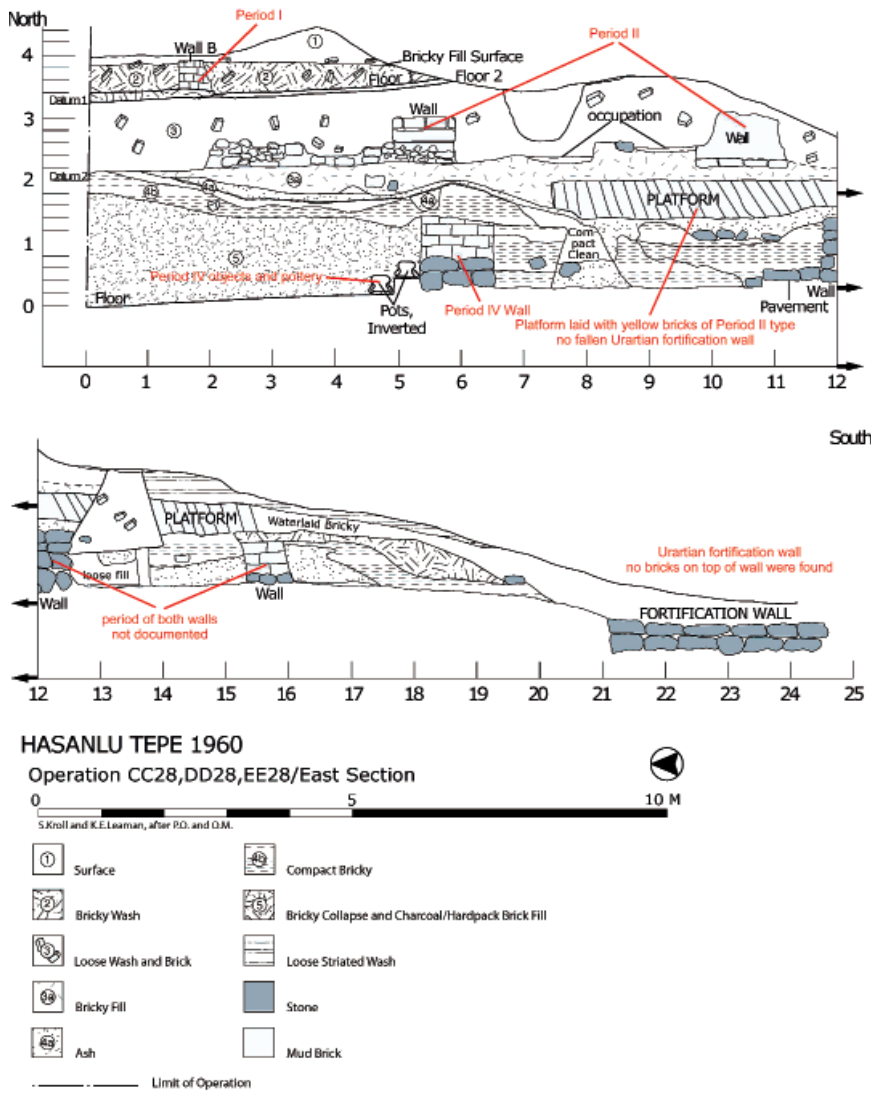


Fig. 11. Eastern section of operations CC28-DD28-EE28 (1960), reconstructed through slides and original field drawings by K. Leaman and the author; courtesy of the Hasanlu project.



Fig. 12. Cylinder seal Has 64-1084, published erroneously as period IVb, but probably from period IIIb; courtesy of the Hasanlu project.

extremely vague in this point. Reading his text carefully, he avoids the statement that period III pottery was found in this operation (Dyson 1999a: 134).

There is no point to accept the stratigraphic reinterpretation of Hasanlu period IIIb and IIIa as published by Khatib-Shahidi (2006). His interpretation is based on pure speculation, he has got no new excavated evidence and he got no access to the Hasanlu documentation at the UPM.

Glyptic

Two Urartian stamp seals have been found in period IIIb, published several times (Marcus 1996: 146, Fig. 117-118). But more interesting are two cylinder seals, which were incorrectly attributed to period IVb by Dyson and so published by Marcus (Marcus 1996: 116-117; 122). Seal Marcus no. 60 is one of them (fig. 12). On the object card (Has 64-1084) no find spot is given. When a first Hasanlu database was set up in 1991, it was noted that this seal had no find spot, no area where it came from. So it was very unfortunate by Dyson to label this seal with no context as coming from period IVb and pass this information on to M. Marcus. He even reconstructed a findspot: room 7 in BB II. It is no surprise; the seal was put by D. Collon in review of Marcus publication into the 7th century BCE

(Collon 1999: 138). Marcus seal no. 71 (Has 70-366), also listed among IVb seals, has no context at all in the records, coming from a dump. It was attributed to the 7th century by D. Collon too. Both seals could have belonged to period IIIb. A date in the 7th century for these seals agrees well with the 7th century Uartian pottery and objects found at Hasanlu (Kroll 2010: Fig. 6-8). Seal Marcus No. 60 moreover got a good parallel at the 7th century BCE site of Karmir Blur (Ayvazian 2006: 777-778). Recently another parallel has been published from tomb A12 in the Zagros Graveyard near Sanandaj (Amelirad e.a. 2012: Pl 22: 2).

Period IIIa

After period IIIb follows a long period of abandonment as indicated by almost a meter of erosion deposits produced by the filling in of the standing ruins (period IIIa). Period IIIa is the period in (late) Achaemenid times, where Classic Triangle Ware and Western Triangle Ware appear first as



Fig. 13. Typical tiny Hasanlu period IIIa Triangle Ware sherds, all likely to come from secondary deposits; courtesy of the Hasanlu project.

described by Dyson (Dyson 1999a and b). This implies there is a hiatus of considerable time between period IIIb and IIIa.

“Studies of garbage disposal in modern groups have shown that the closer material is to its place of use, the less chance it has to break and the more complete it will be. In other words, a first-time garbage deposit (such as a kitchen garbage can) will contain bigger pieces than a secondary deposit (such as the town dump)” (Gopnik 2011: 325). All the pottery from period IIIa must be considered a secondary deposit because of the tiny size of its sherds. Only in rare cases there is a join with another sherd. This is in accord with the nonexistence of any substantial architecture in this period. After period IIIb the next period with substantial architecture is period II and not period IIIa.

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POTTERS' MARKS IN URARTU ON THE BASIS OF NEW EVIDENCE FROM AYANIS FORTRESS

BY

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Abstract: Potters' marks are one of the major topics deliberated by the scholars in the Near Eastern archaeology. There are some explanations about the meaning of these marks which are still under discussion. The excavations in the Urartian sites demonstrate that the application of pot marks were taken place in the Urartian culture. In this paper, I will debate the meaning of the pot marks in Urartu mainly focusing on the archaeological results from Ayanis Fortress in Eastern Turkey.

Key words: Urartu, Iron Age, pottery, Ayanis, pot marks

Introduction

Pottery traditions in the Eastern Anatolia represent some changes with the establishment of the Urartian Kingdom. High quality pottery traditions, fast wheel and pot marks for the first time begin to appear in this period. This evidence indicates that a mass production and a specialization on pottery occurred in the Urartian period. The quantity of pots in the storage rooms in the fortresses may also refer to the existence of mass production, as well possible state involvement. Although thousands of pottery sherds have been unearthed in Urartian sites, any archaeological remains related with pottery production or pottery workshops have not been found yet. Moreover, only a small percentage of the sherds bear pottery marks within the whole Urartian pottery assemblage. Therefore the meaning and the reason behind these marks is still not very clear and the structure of the pottery workshops is not well known, whether they are private enterprises or controlled by the state. Although there is no archaeological evidence about pottery production in Urartu, at least, the existence of stamped marks on two Ayanis sherds, depicting "a potter working on a wheel", illustrates the

activity of pottery production in the Urartian period (Çilingiroğlu 2012: 100-101) (**Pl. 10h**).

Since the potters' marks do not have any certain meanings yet, it is clear that the marks added before firing are certainly related with the touch of the potter himself. The meaning and function of these marks can be relevant with a number of possibilities that are debatable. In this paper, I will discuss these possibilities based on the archaeological results from the Ayanis excavations focusing on the pots marked before firing. Since the signs that designate the volumes are mostly known in Urartu, I will not consider them as they are characterized by incised hieroglyphic signs mostly applied after firing¹. Usually, huge pithoi and trefoil jugs bear capacity signs in Ayanis. The existence of both capacity signs and potters' marks together on the same pots (**Pl. 6j**) also makes it easier to notice the capacity signs within the Ayanis material.

The pottery obtained from the Ayanis "fortress" and the "outer town" excavations indicate the variety of ware types and pottery forms during the Urartian period². In total, 16,160 Urartian sherds and pots were recorded until the end of the 2011 excavation season. 557 of these sherds bear pot marks and 179 of them, belonging to the period between 1989 and 1997 seasons, were published in 1999 and 2001 (Derin 1999: 81-100, Kozbe, Sağlamtimur, Çevik 2001: 85-153, Stone & Zimansky 2001: 355-375). In this study, I will deal with the material between 1998 and 2011 that represent new evidences about pot marks in Urartu³.

Description and Distribution of the Potters' Marks in Ayanis

Pottery with pot marks in Ayanis was obtained from different areas (**Pl. 12, 13**). The distribution of the potters' marks in Ayanis indicates that

¹ For detail information about the volumes of Urartian pots see Payne 2005; H. Sağlamtimur, "The Volumes of Some Urartian Pithoi", *Anatolian Iron Ages V*, eds. A. Çilingiroğlu- G. Darbyshire, London, 2005: 139-143; M. Salvini, "On the Estimation of the Volumes of Some Urartian Pithoi", *Ancient West and East* 9, 2010: 21-42.

² Ayanis Fortress is located to the 38 km north of modern city of Van in the Eastern Turkey. It has been excavated by Prof. Dr. Altan Çilingiroğlu since 1989. Archaeological data indicate that the fortress was built around first half of the 7th century BC by the Urartian king Rusa II.

³ I have been attending to the excavation since 1995. I would like to thank to Prof. Dr. Altan Çilingiroğlu who provided me to study on the Ayanis pottery and shared his opinions with long discussion.

Area XI is the densest place with the ratio of 68%. It is followed by the Area IX where the density is around 13%. The rest of the potters' marks are come from Areas VII, V, III, VIII and the Outer Town. The reason for the density of the pot marks in Areas XI and IX is related with the existence of pottery depot rooms where a large number of the pot marks were found, especially in Area XI. Area XI includes two depot rooms as Room 13 and 14 (Erdem 2012: in press). These rooms are located just to the south of the royal building where a number of royal objects have been found. Room 13 was used only for the storage of the red burnished pots and almost all bear pot marks. On the contrary, Room 14 was used only for the storage of buff and brown jars, many of which have pot marks. Not only pottery depot rooms but also some of the domestic buildings (Rooms 2, 4, 7 and 8) in Area XI contains several pots with pot marks.

The potters' marks from Ayanis are divided into two main groups according to their techniques: incised and stamped marks. The incised marks consist of crosses, plus (+) shaped signs, tridents, butterfly shaped signs, crescentic lines, dots, arrow shaped signs, hanger shaped signs and parallel vertical lines. On the other hand, clovers, single or double crescents, circular impressions or dots, star motifs, checkerboard motifs and figurative scenes are the dominant motifs within the stamped marks. Observations of the incised marks indicate that both sharp and rounded tools were used to apply the motifs. The motifs of crosses, butterfly shaped signs, arrow shaped signs and parallel vertical lines were made by a sharp pointed tool. However tridents, hanger shaped signs, crescentic lines, dots and plus (+) shaped signs were usually applied by a rounded tool. The marks of tridents and plus (+) shaped signs occasionally were made by a sharp pointed tool as well.

The most common incised mark in Ayanis is the motif of "crescent with two dots" (**Pl. 1a-h**). The dots placed in the crescent. But the placement of the dots on several pots is different, where the dots are out of the crescent motif (**Pl. 1i-k**). These marks occur only in the red burnished ware group in the forms of trefoil jugs, simple jugs and bowls with/without grooves, especially beneath the handles of the trefoil jugs, the base and the lowest part of the body of the bowls. Only two examples differ from these signs with their three dots. Similar marks have been found in Armavir, Erebuni-Arinberd and Toprakkale (Ayvazian 2006: 1099, Lehmann-Haupt 1931:579) where the dots of marks become like a short lines in irregular shape.

Another group of marks is the ones with “one dot” and “two dots”, occurring in the red burnished wares (**Pl. 2a-d**). The former were placed under the base of the trefoil jugs while the latter were preferred on beneath the handles. But on bowls, these signs were placed on the lower part of the body. The marks with “three dots” are also seen on some pots forming a triangle (**Pl. 2e-f**). Jars and deep bowls in the brown and buff ware group bear this mark. At Ayanis this group of potters’ mark is common amongst the jars (Derin 1999: Fig. 8). Similar signs appear in Karmir Blur and Upper Anzaf in the red burnished ware group (Piotrovsky 1952: 19, Duyar 2007: 48). Another mark with dots is composed of “five horizontal dots with a vertical line connected to the one in the middle” (**Pl. 2g-j**). This mark appears on trefoil jugs, simple jugs, bowls with/without grooves and goblets in the red burnished wares. For the placement of the mark, bases of the trefoil jugs and bowls were preferred, but on goblets it is placed on the lower part of the body as upside down. In some cases, this mark includes a downwards crescent at the end of the vertical line (**Pl. 2k-m**).

The “Crescent” motif without dots is the other common group in the incised potters’ marks (**Pl. 3**). Even though it was both incised and impressed, the size of the incised is much bigger than the impressed ones. For the application of the motif, there is no specific direction for the orientation of the crescent motif. Incised crescent motifs are seen in various forms in the red burnished ware group. It is applied either on the shoulder or under the base of the trefoil jugs and simple jugs. On the other hand, within the brown ware group it occurs on bowls, deep bowls, small sized jars, large sized jars and pithoi, and placed on the body of bowls, on the shoulder of the jars and under the rim of the pithoi. Similar signs were found in Toprakkale as well (Lehmann-Haupt 1931: 579). In some cases this mark was applied together with a plus (+) shaped sign (**Pl. 4a-b**) under the handle of the jugs and the base or body of the bowls.

“The plus (+) shaped” sign and “crosses” (**Pl. 4c-f**) are the other incised marks found on the pots. These marks are dominant in the brown, pink and buff wares. Crosses occur only on small jars while the plus (+) shaped signs are seen on small jars, large jars and pithoi. Although crosses are only represented by a single form, the application place of this sign does not have a certain location and is applied on the body or under the base. On the contrary, plus (+) shaped signs were always placed on the upper or lower part of the body of jars and under the rim of the pithoi. The same marks occur in most Urartian centers such as Upper Anzaf, Çavuştepe,

Tushpa Necropolis, Karmir Blur, Armavir, Erebuni and Bastam (Duyar 2007: 31-37, Payne 2005: 157-164, 236-237, Piotrovsky 1952: 19, Ayvazian 2006: 1056, 1097, 1100, 1105, Kroll 1988: Abb. 8/7). The same marks were also known in the Assyrian repertory (Duistermaat 2007: 809, Fig. E. 6-7). In some cases these marks were applied together with dots. Several red burnished trefoil jugs and brown long-necked jars bear plus (+) shaped or cross marks with one or two dots (**Pl. 4g-k**)⁴.

The “butterfly shaped mark” is another group at Ayanis (**Pl. 5a-c**), always applied on the shoulder of the jars in the brown wares. In some cases, a vertical line was also added under the butterfly. Similar signs were found in Upper Anzaf but here on fruit stands and jugs in the brown ware category (Duyar 2007: 38-40). Another incised mark is “tridents” (**Pl. 5d-f**). It was applied on the body of the jars and under the rim of the pithoi. Similar signs were found on a fruit stand from Upper Anzaf, a jar from Armavir, Çavuştepe and Toprakkale (Duyar 2007: 49, Ayvazian 2006: 1057, Payne 2005: 234-25). It is also known from the Assyrian pot marks as well (Duistermaat 2007: 809, Fig. E. 10).

“Arrow shaped marks”⁵ on the red burnished trefoil jugs (**Pl. 5g-h**), “hanger shaped marks”⁶ (**Pl. 5i-k**) on jars and pithoi in brown wares, “long vertical lines”⁷ (**Pl. 6a-b**) on pithoi, “a circle cut by a vertical line”, “a circle and vertical line next to each other” (**Pl. 6c-e**), “two short vertical lines” (**Pl. 6f**) and a “plough”⁸ (**Pl. 6h**) on the long-necked jars in brown wares are other incised marks from Ayanis. Two pithoi bear incised marks consisting of one crescent and an obscure figure (**Pl. 6g**).

Stamped marks on the pottery from Ayanis consist of stamped impressions except for one cylinder seal impression. Stamp impressions reflect the negative of the positive image on the tool. And these impressions do not have any circular border as the stamped seal impressions. One of the most common marks in the first group impressed marks is “double

⁴ Comparable motifs are also observed in Çavuştepe, Toprakkale, Upper Anzaf, Karmir Blur and Armavir (Payne 2005: 171, Lehmann-Haupt 1931: 579, Duyar 2007: 36, Duyar 2007: 36, Ayvazian 2006: 1074).

⁵ Good parallels come from Upper Anzaf and Armavir (Duyar 2007: 61, Ayvazian 2006: 1065).

⁶ It is very similar to the measurement sign of *aqarqi* (Salvini 2001: 293-311) and similar marks have been found in Upper Anzaf (Duyar 2007: 42).

⁷ Similar marks have been found in Upper Anzaf (Duyar 2007: 40-42).

⁸ For a good comparison with Assyria see Duistermaat 2007: 809, Fig. E. 8.

crescents”⁹ (Pl. 6i-k). Double crescents are configured as one inside the other. In some cases, these crescents impressed twice. It is placed either beneath the handle or under the base of the trefoil jugs, while only the base was preferred for the bowls in the red burnished wares. “Single crescents”¹⁰ (Pl. 7a-h) are applied on the shoulder or rarely on the lowest part of the body of jars in the buff, cream or brown wares, in any direction. In some cases, two dots accompany this crescent motif and they can be placed on any side of the crescent shape (Pl. 7i-j). On the other hand, some single crescents were stamped twice and sometimes they reflect different orientations with each other as side by side or one above the other (Fig. 7c-h). “Clover motifs” are one of the other impressed marks in Ayanis (Pl. 8a-d), placed on the shoulder of the jars in brown and buff wares. Sometimes it is pressed twice on the same pot. Similar marks have been found in Toprakkale, Van Kalesi Höyük, Tushpa Necropolis, Çavuştepe, Upper Anzaf and Bastam (Lehmann-Haupt 1931: 575, Sivas 1998: Lev. 43c, 57b, Payne 2005: 108, 112, Duyar 2007: 22, Kroll 1979: 223, Abb.1/6). The impressed “double circles” (Pl. 8e-f) consists of two circles, which are connected to each other and look like the number “8”, sometimes placed horizontally as well. Similar marks have been found in Van Kalesi Höyük and Toprakkale (Sivas 1998: Lev. 83e, Lehmann-Haupt 1931: 587). The other stamped marks can be listed as “architectural (tower?)”¹¹ mark (Pl. 8g) beneath of the handle of a jug in the buff ware and an obscure figure (Pl. 8h) on a pithos.

As mentioned above, stamped seal impressions are different than the other impression marks with their circular impression borders and positive images of the motifs. They can be categorized in two main groups as geometric and figurative stamps according to the motifs. Geometric motifs consist of vegetable, astral and architectural figures. Stars, plus (+) shaped signs, two vertical lines and checkerboard motifs can be listed within the geometric motifs of the stamped seal impressions. Almost all stamped seal marks are impressed, twice on the same pot. The “star” and “plus (+)”¹²

⁹ The parallels come from Toprakkale (Lehmann-Haupt 1931: 579).

¹⁰ Similar marks have been found in Toprakkale (Lehmann-Haupt 1931: 572) and Assyria (Duistermaat 2007: 809, Fig. E. 1-2).

¹¹ Similar mark has been found under the base of a red burnished trefoil jug in Upper Anzaf (Duyar 2007: 48).

¹² Good parallels come from Toprakkale, Arinberd and Armavir (Lehmann-Haupt 1931: 575, Ayvazian 2006: 612, 376).

motifs on the shoulder of the long necked jars in the brown and buff wares (**Pl. 8i-k, 9a-b**), “two vertical lines” (**Pl. 9c**) on the long necked jars in the brown wares, “checkerboard” motif on the jars exist on the stamped seal impressions in Ayanis. One of the examples in the checkerboard motif has tiny points between vertical and horizontal lines (**Pl. 9f**). The last stamped seal impression in this group bears the figure of a “jar” on a pithos (**Pl. 9g**). The application of two different marks on the same pot is also seen in the Ayanis material. The “crescent and circular mark”¹³ together (**Pl. 9h-i**) on the body of the bowls and on the shoulders of the jars and pithoi, “clover and crescent”¹⁴ (**Fig. 9j**) motif on the shoulder or on the lowest part of the body of the jars, “clover and hanger shaped signs” (**Fig. 10a-b**) on the pithoi, “plus (+) stamped mark together with crescent” and “clover mark together with architectural impression” (**Pl. 10c-d**) on the jars occur in the stamped seal impressions in Ayanis.

The figurative scenes in the stamped seal impressions bear the figures of lion, horse, human, bull, winged fantastic animals, potters’ on a wheel and offering table (**Pl. 10e-j, 14**). Only one complete necked jar bears cylinder seal impression surrounding the shoulder. The main motif in this impression is a tree of life in the middle of two goats whose forelegs are upheld towards the tree and one lion on the behind of the goat at right (**Pl. 11**). It is interesting that the same impression was also found on a pottery sherd from Armavir. Examination of the impressions indicate that these two examples from Ayanis and Armavir were sealed with the same cylinder seal. This clearly proves that these two pots were produced in the same workshop and also indicates the relationship between fortresses in the Urartian Kingdom.

Discussion

The evidence from Ayanis provides information about pot marks in Urartu. A study of the pottery indicates that some of the pot marks are only seen on some specific forms and wares (**Pl. 12**). The marks of “crescent with two dots”, “one dot”, “two dots”, “five horizontal dots with a vertical line”, “five horizontal dots with a vertical line and a crescent” “arrow shaped marks” and “double crescents” were only applied on the red

¹³ Comparable mark has been found in Toprakkale (Lehmann-Haupt 1931: 572, 575).

¹⁴ Good parallels come from Çavuştepe (Payne 2005: 131).

burnished pottery in the forms of jugs, bowls and goblets. The goblets are only represented with the mark of “five horizontal dots with a vertical line”. On the contrary “plus (+) shaped marks”, “crosses”, “butterfly shaped marks”, “three dots”, “tridents”, “hanger shaped marks”, “impressed crescents”, “impressed crescent and circle” and “vertical lines” were only found on the brown, pinkish brown and buff wares in the forms of small sized jars, necked large jars, large bowls and pithoi. Some of the marks in this group are characterized by a single form. For example, “crosses” and “butterfly shaped signs” are only represented on small jars, “impressed crescent” motif only characterized by the necked large jars and “vertical lines” only seen on pithoi. On the other hand some of the marks are seen both in the red burnished and brown, buff ware groups in different forms. “Incised crescents”, “incised crescent with plus (+) shaped motif”, “plus (+) shaped motif with dots” and “crosses with dots” are seen in the red burnished, brown and buff ware groups in the forms of jugs, bowls, large jars, large bowls and pithoi. The most common mark is “incised crescent”, which is seen in all forms and wares. This indicates the existence of some form of specialization on some vessel types and wares in different workshops. It is plausible that workshops producing these vessels had only access to local clay sources, which inevitably limited the vessel fabrics and forms produced by them. Therefore it can be assumed that some of the workshops specialized on some specific forms or wares.

When the usage of the potters’ marks in the Urartian centers is investigated, it is difficult to suggest a chronological sequence about pot marks. However, there are still some hints allowing for possible suggestions. Some of the marks including incised single crescents, impressed double and single crescents only existed in Ayanis and Toprakkale, which did not exist before Rusa II¹⁵. Since there is still no evidence about the usage of

¹⁵ I should note that Toprakkale continued to exist after Rusa II, although there are some arguments about its’ continuation mainly based on an inscription (Gövelek) belonging to an Urartian king Rusa son of Erimena. U. Seidl suggests that Rusa son of Erimena in the text of Gövelek ruled before Rusa II son of Argishti (Seidl, U., 2007. Wer gründete Rusahinili/Toprakkale?, *Armenian Journal of Near Eastern Studies II*: 137-145), a suggestion followed by some other scholars as well (Roaf, M., 2010. Thureau-Dangin, Lehmann-Haupt, Rusa Sardurihi and Rusa Erimenahi, *Armenian Journal of Near Eastern Studies V/1*: 66-82). If this suggestion is taken into consideration, the existence of Toprakkale should end after Rusa II. On the other hand, M. Salvini and A. Çilingiroğlu suggest that Rusa son of Erimena should reigned in the period after Rusa II, and the present author inclines to share the same opinion (Salvini, M., 2007. Argisti, Rusa, Erimena, Rusa

these marks in the earlier Urartian centers, this may indicate that the crescent motifs were more likely common in the period of Rusa II, in the 7th century BC, especially at Ayanis. Besides, the potters' marks in Erebuni should also take into consideration due to general belief about its' abandonment in the period of Rusa II (Piotrovsky 1967: 99). However recent excavations provide satisfactory data about the continuity of Erebuni after Rusa II, (Stronach et al 2010: 115, 127-128) which is also attest on the pottery marks as well. The pottery marks from Erebuni such as clovers, plus (+) shaped signs or jar marks do not differ from those of found in Ayanis. Therefore Erebuni cannot be listed in the sites providing a chronological sequence for the pottery marks. Similarly, some other marks like incised crescents with dots, three dots, plus (+) shaped motifs, crosses, butterfly and pitchfork motifs, arrowheads, hanger shaped marks, double circles, clovers, cequer boards and star motifs existed in Ayanis, Toprakkale, Karmir-Blur, Upper Anzaf, Van Fortress Mound, Tushpa Necropolis, Bastam, Armavir and Arinberd, which can be dated to a very long period from King Menua to Rusa II. Therefore these signs can be accepted as a continuation of the earlier traditions until the end of the Rusa II. This continuation also indicates the relation of potters' marks with the workshop, but not craftsman.

The meaning of the potters' mark on the pottery is a topic still under discussion. A number of possible interpretations have been made about their meanings in the Bronze and Iron Age cultures. These interpretations are mainly related with "production" or "distribution" including marks of craftsman, ownership, workshop or production center, destination, commodity, capacity and provenance/city (Papadopoulos 1994: 473, 478; Şenol 2006: 18-19). When archeological data about Urartian culture is taken into consideration, there are some clues about interpretations of these marks. The relationship between pot marks and trade activities is one of the main approaches in studies about Aegean cultures. Since the congestion of the Early Iron Age potters' marks in the Aegean is mostly related to widely trading cities, the potters' marks were accepted as a result of an active export trade, but not local consumption (Papadopoulos 1994: 489).

und die Löwenschwänze: Eine Urartäische Palastgeschichte des VII. JH. V. CHR., *Armenian Journal of Near Eastern Studies II*: 146-162, Çilingiroğlu, A., 2008. Rusa Son of Argishti: Rusa II or Rusa III, *Ancient Near Eastern Studies XLV*: 21-29). Based on this suggestion, Toprakkale should be continued to exist after Rusa II son of Argishti.

This also explains the reason for the existence of only a small number of pot marks in any culture. However trade or exchange activities in Urartu are less known and there is not enough archaeological evidence or written documents for understanding the trading activity. The archaeological remains from Ayanis are not only storage jars, but also serving pots like jugs, bowls or goblets that bear potters' marks as seen in Room 13. It is easy to understand the transportation of storage jars since they might have been used as containers for trading various materials, which is known in Urartu as taxation. The bullae from Ayanis depot rooms (Area VII) give the name of some people who sent material to Ayanis as tax (Salvini 2001: 284, 286). On the contrary, it is hard to explain the existence of trade activities when small serving pots taken into consideration since they cannot be used as containers. Therefore, to build a relationship between potters' marks and trade activities in the Urartian culture is not very applicable. On the other hand, the application of stamp sealing marks especially on the storage jars is most probably a result of the trade, exchange or tax, which might be accepted as an indication of state control. There could be several meanings behind these administrative marks, such as controlling the taxes, quality of the goods and guarantee of the capacity. Or maybe some elites were just willing to separate their own pots within the citadel. Furthermore, the distribution and density of the marks in the Urartian centers do not furnish a pattern if any marks can be attributed to any provenance or city. Since most of the marks are seen in all other Urartian centers, it is not possible at present to make a suggestion about their origin. Parallel to this, it is also not possible to accept the pot marks in the meaning of a destination place.

The other possibility to be considered in the meanings of the potters' marks is the commodity. This is logical in some point if the storage jars only are taken into consideration. Since I do not want to correlate with the earlier periods, it has to be noted that there are some parallel marks in the Late Uruk period hieroglyphs which were used in the trade activities meaning ship, cow, oil or wool. These marks were used as tokens, and were impressed on the bullae in the beginning of the appearance of writing system in Mesopotamia (S. Hırçın, *Çivi Yazısı. Ortaya Çıkışı, Gelişmesi, Çözümü*, İstanbul, 1995: Çizim I). Interestingly, similar marks were found on some of the pots in the Ayanis citadel, and this makes us think of the possibility of similar aspects in the usage of these marks. Accordingly, potters' marks in Urartu also might be used for the labeling of the material

in the large pots. The storage of meat and grain in the pots is still common tradition in Eastern Turkey. The existence of animal bones and grain in some of the pots in the storage rooms in the Ayanis citadel may be explained with a similar practice. Maybe labeling the pots makes it easier for the servants to understanding the material in the pots without looking inside. However, this suggestion only corresponds to the storage jars and do not cover small service pots, which makes the suggestion faint. Whatever their meaning, the reason for the selection of specific marks by the potter can also be related with the symbols of the gods as much as functional purposes. But the usage of the symbols of the gods does not give any divine or religious meaning to the pot itself (For the opposite suggestion see Ter Martirosov 2009: 127-145). It is clear from the Ayanis excavations where rare pottery sherds with pot marks were found in the temple area.

As mentioned above, archaeological evidence such as high quality pots, the appearance of a fast wheel and the amount of pottery in the depot rooms of the citadels made clear the existence of mass pottery production during the Urartian period. Even though many Urartian citadels have been excavated, there is still no evidence about pottery production places in the citadels. As it is well known, Urartian citadels on the hills were planned with great building techniques by highly experienced architects. The topography of the terrain was clearly taken into consideration when the spatial arrangement in the citadels was designed. This means every space on the hill served with functional meanings as attested in the Ayanis excavations (Çilingiroğlu 2004: 205-231.) Since any archaeological evidence about pottery workshops in the citadels have not been found, it can be suggested that the Urartians did not build any pottery workshops in the citadels. Their existence in the citadels is also unlikely from the point of its organization because there is simply not enough space for drying and firing massive amounts of pottery inside the citadel. Therefore, pottery production activities should be conducted in the outer towns somewhere around the citadels. Since the knowledge about outer towns is poor in Urartu because of very little archaeological excavations, there is still no evidence about pottery workshops in the outer towns. Most probably, these workshops were close to the clay sources useful for the pottery production. The areas around the clay sources may have not only been used as workshops but also as settlements. Even today, only the villages close to the useful clay sources, like Bardakçı Village in Van, deals with pottery production. On the contrary, the villagers in modern Ayanis do not produce any pottery, and only one

old woman is left who was producing *tandır* in the past. She declares that since the clay source of Ayanis is around 3 km. away, it is hard for her as an old woman to take the clay with a barrow and carry it to the village. Moreover, she added that this clay is only useful for producing *tandır* and for decent pottery they need to go further away. This can be one of the most important reasons why today Ayanis settlers have no specialization in the pottery production. On the basis of this knowledge, it can be assumed that there would have been some settlements around clay sources dealing with pottery production during the Urartian period, whether private or under state control. Therefore it can be suggested that the potters' marks in Urartu may reflect the clay sources/settlements or workshops. This can be also explained as a kind of guarantee mark for the producers/workshops indicating that pottery from their workshops/settlements was produced in the quality of their clay sources. Most probably they were in a need to put a mark for giving this guarantee not for daily usage but for elites. There is some evidence from Ayanis excavations about the relation of the pot marks with elites. According to the examinations on the distribution of the potters' marks, the majority has been found in the depot rooms 13 and 14 in the Area XI (Erdem 2012: in press). Archaeological results indicate that these depot rooms were built as basement rooms of the royal complex in the citadel, where a number of royal objects have been found including golden rosettes, a golden fan with an inscription of queen *Qaqli*, a bulla belonging to King Rusa II, a bronze candle, a cornelian bead and some wall mosaic pieces (Çilingiroğlu & Erdem 2009: 8). Depot Room 13 was only used for the storage of the red burnished service pots like trefoil jugs, bowls and goblets. On the other hand Depot Room 14, next to 13, was only used for the storage of the brown and buff jars. In the light of archaeological remains from these rooms, it seems that they were not circulated for daily usage in the citadel but instead they were exclusively used to serve the elites¹⁶. The existence of the potters' marks on most of the pots in these rooms supports the relationship between pot marks and elites. This also explains why only a small number (3%) of pottery bears pot marks in Ayanis and other Urartian centers. There could be several reasons about giving a mark to the pots used by elites, such as hygienic reasons, prevention

¹⁶ The existence of the potters' marks in the Outer Town of Ayanis does not disprove the usage of these pots by elites since some elites population living in the Outer Town is also known from the archaeological remains.

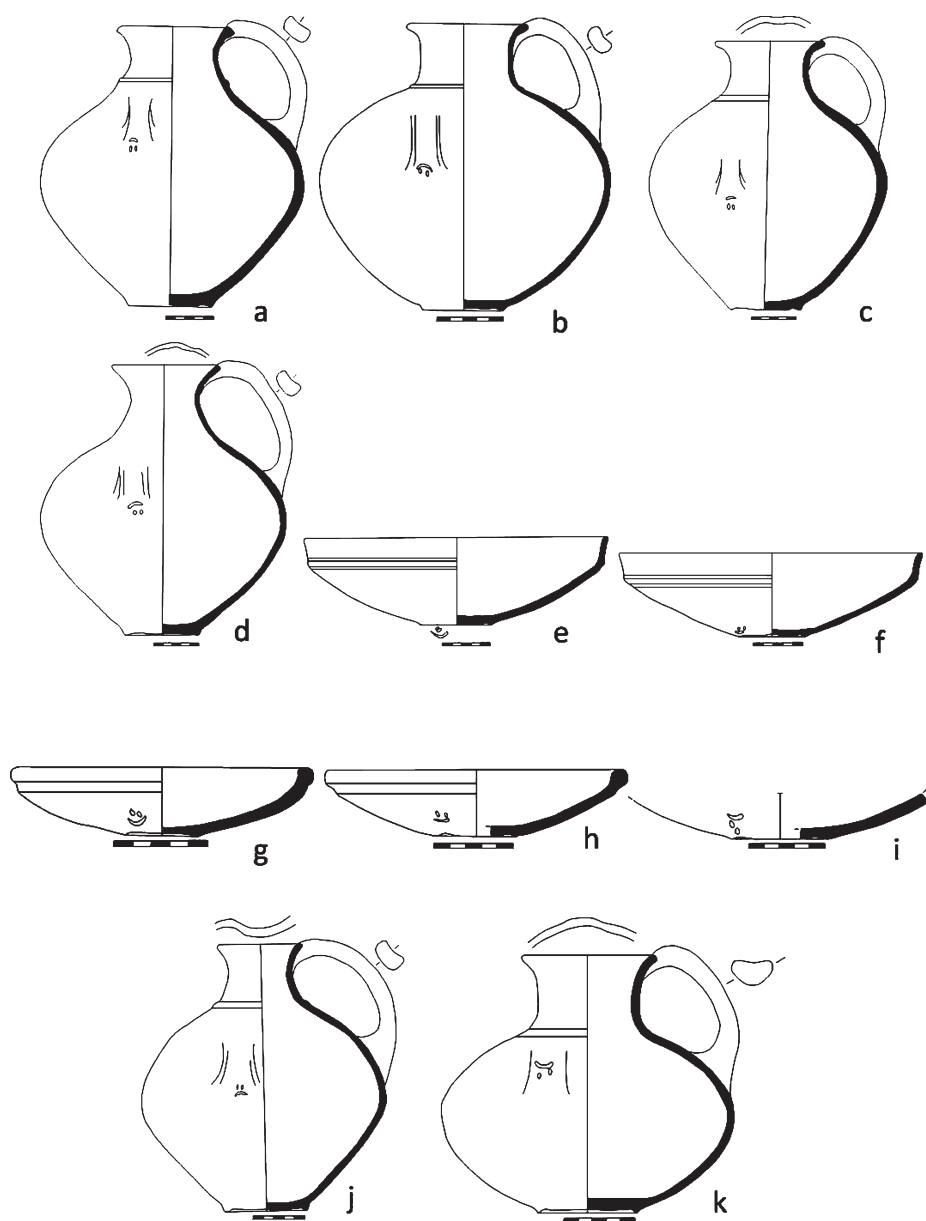
of diseases or sorcery¹⁷. Therefore the potters' marks can be accepted as a kind of signature or guarantee mark for the producer indicating the quality of the vessels to the elites.

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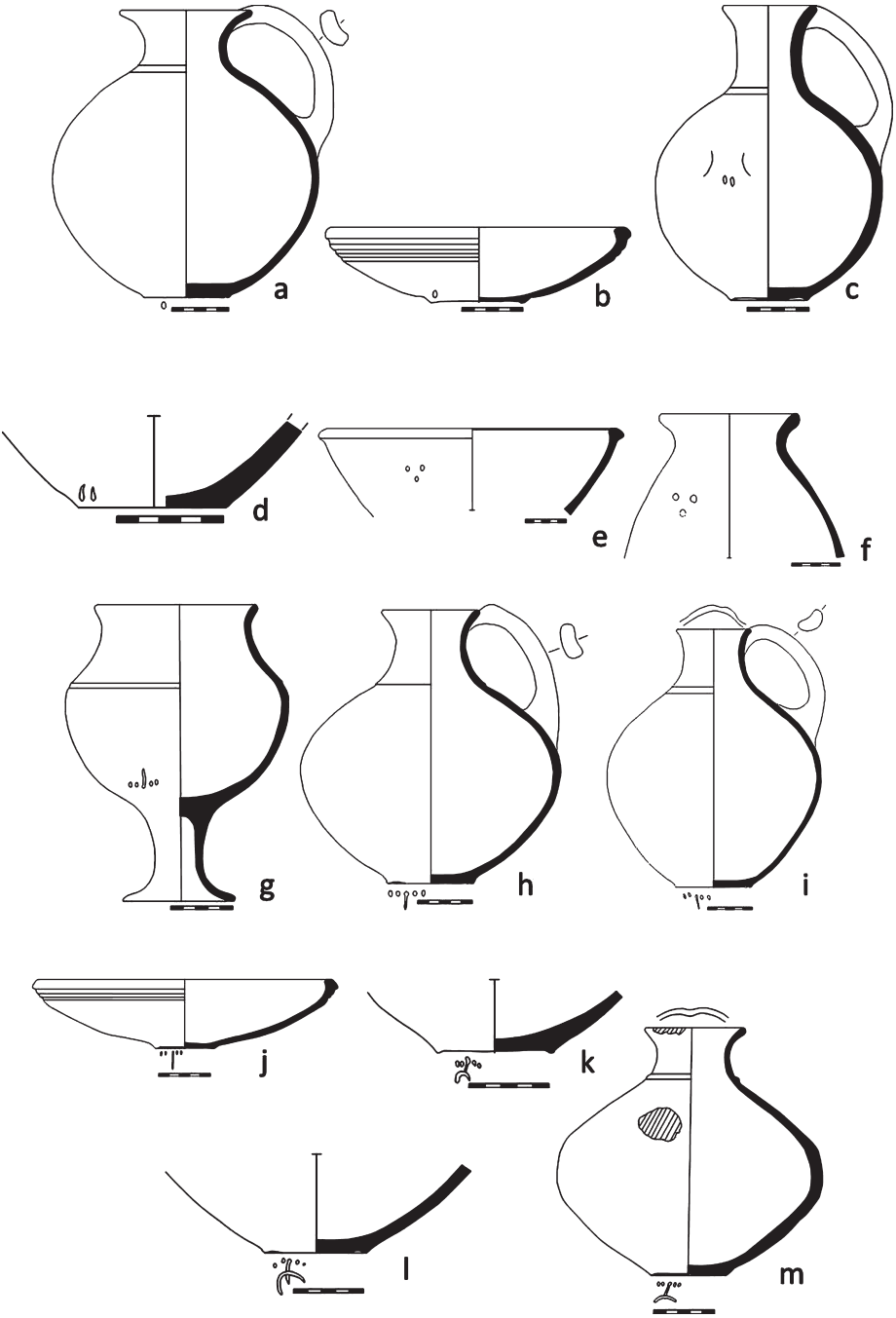
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¹⁷ The practice of the separation of the bones of the consumed meat by the king in Urartu was also suggested basing on the large number of animal bones and clay bullas in a room in the citadel of Bastam (Zimansky 1979: 53-55).

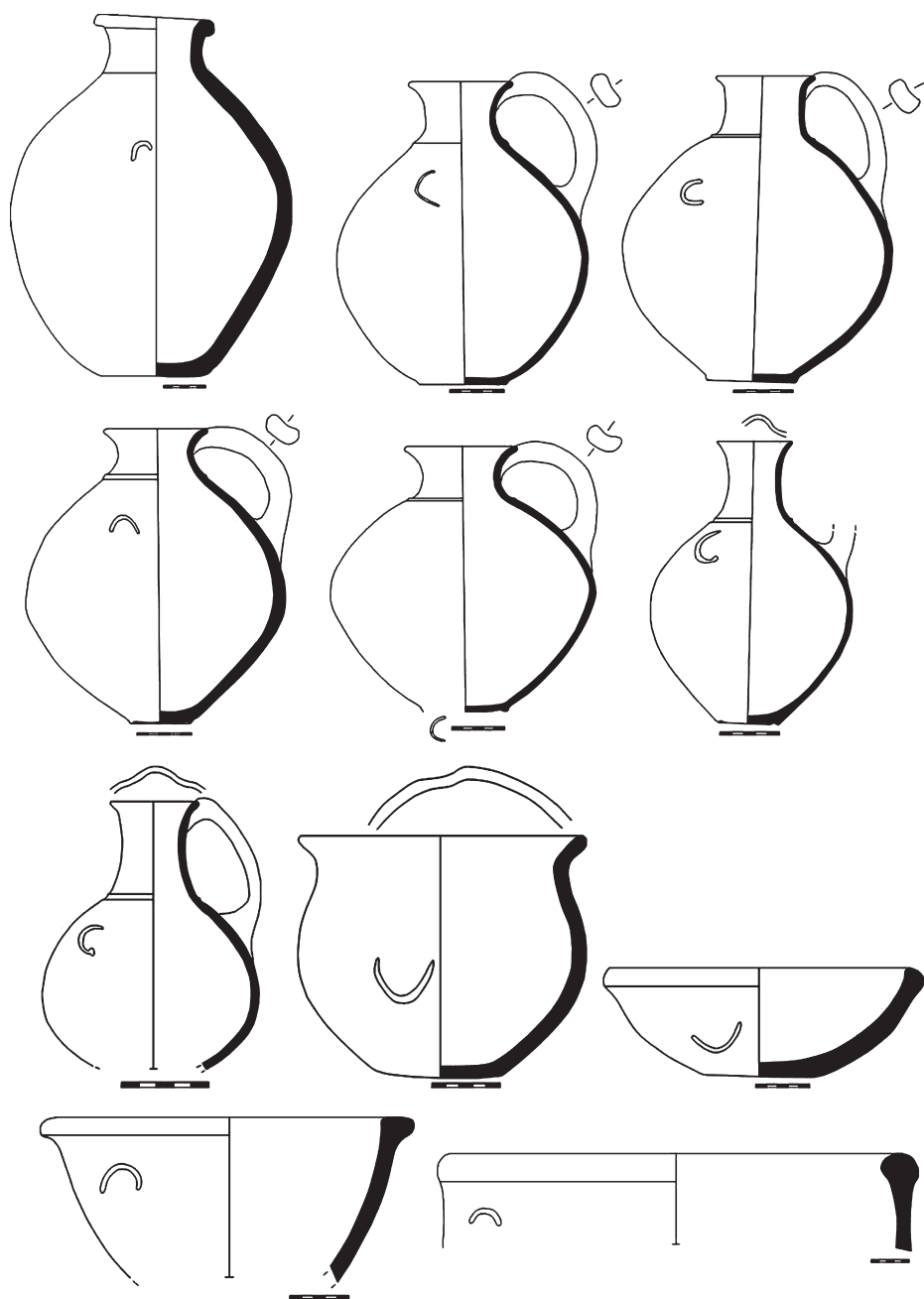
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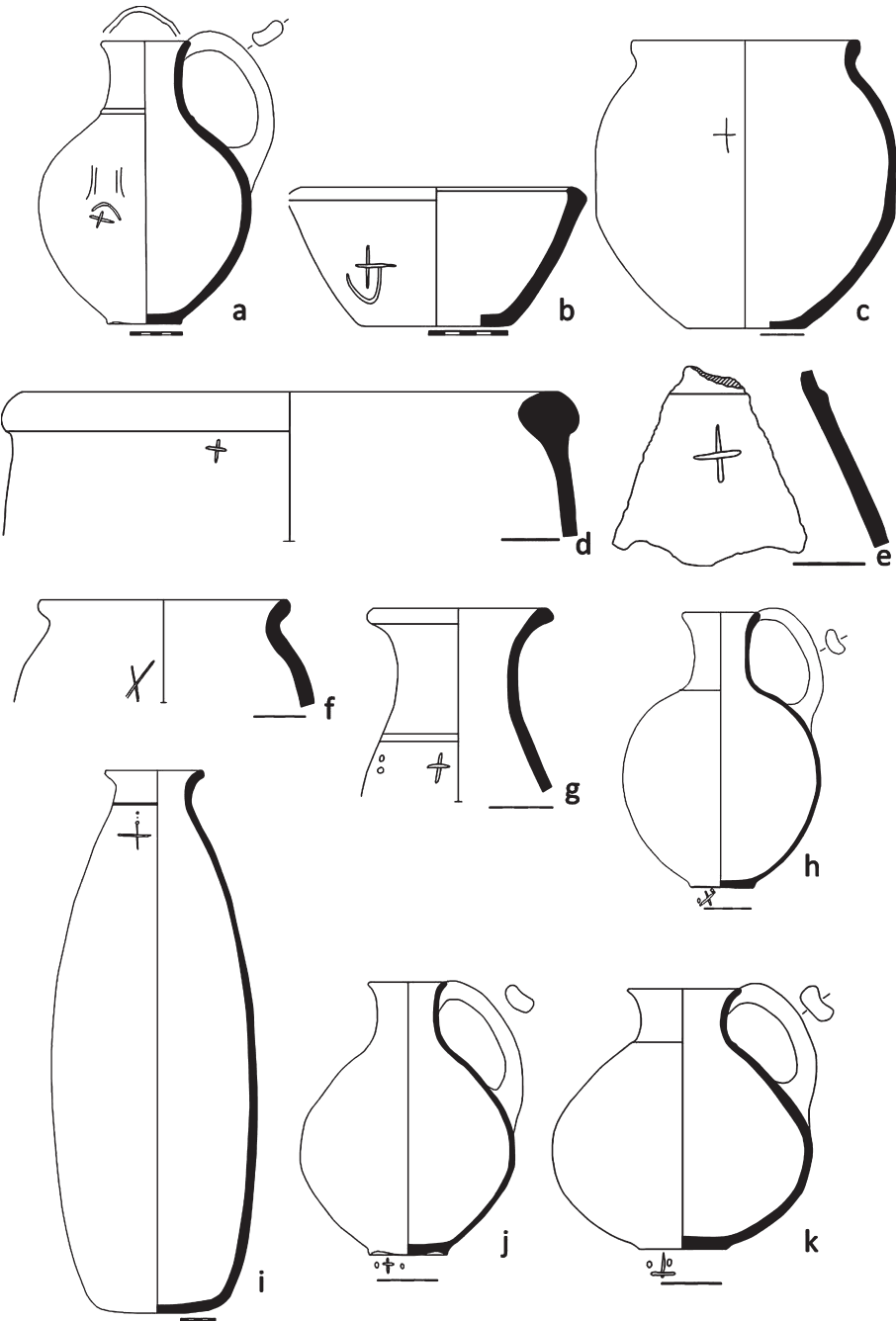
Pl. 1. Drawing of pottery marks from Ayanis.



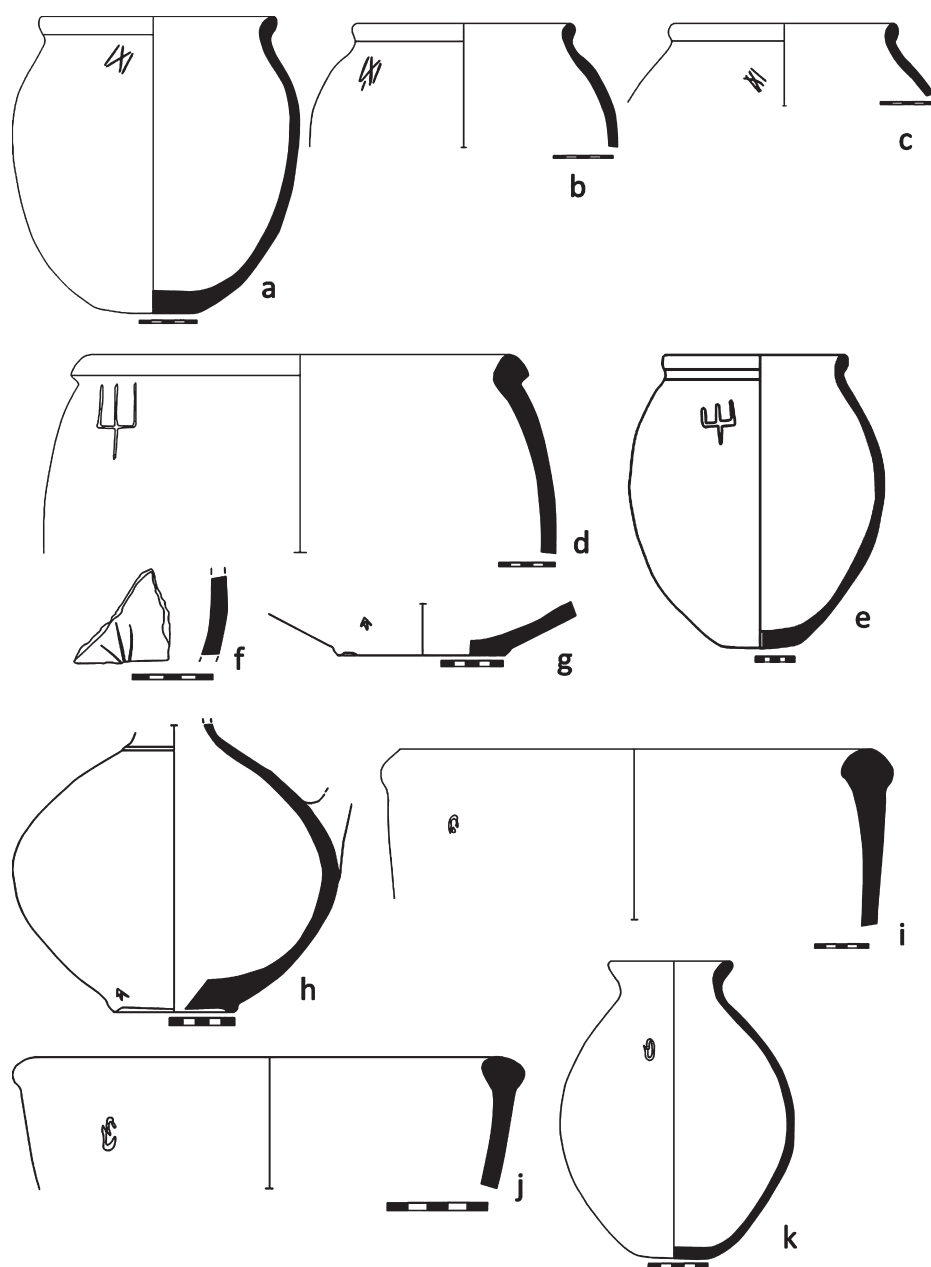
Pl. 2. Drawing of pottery marks from Ayanis.



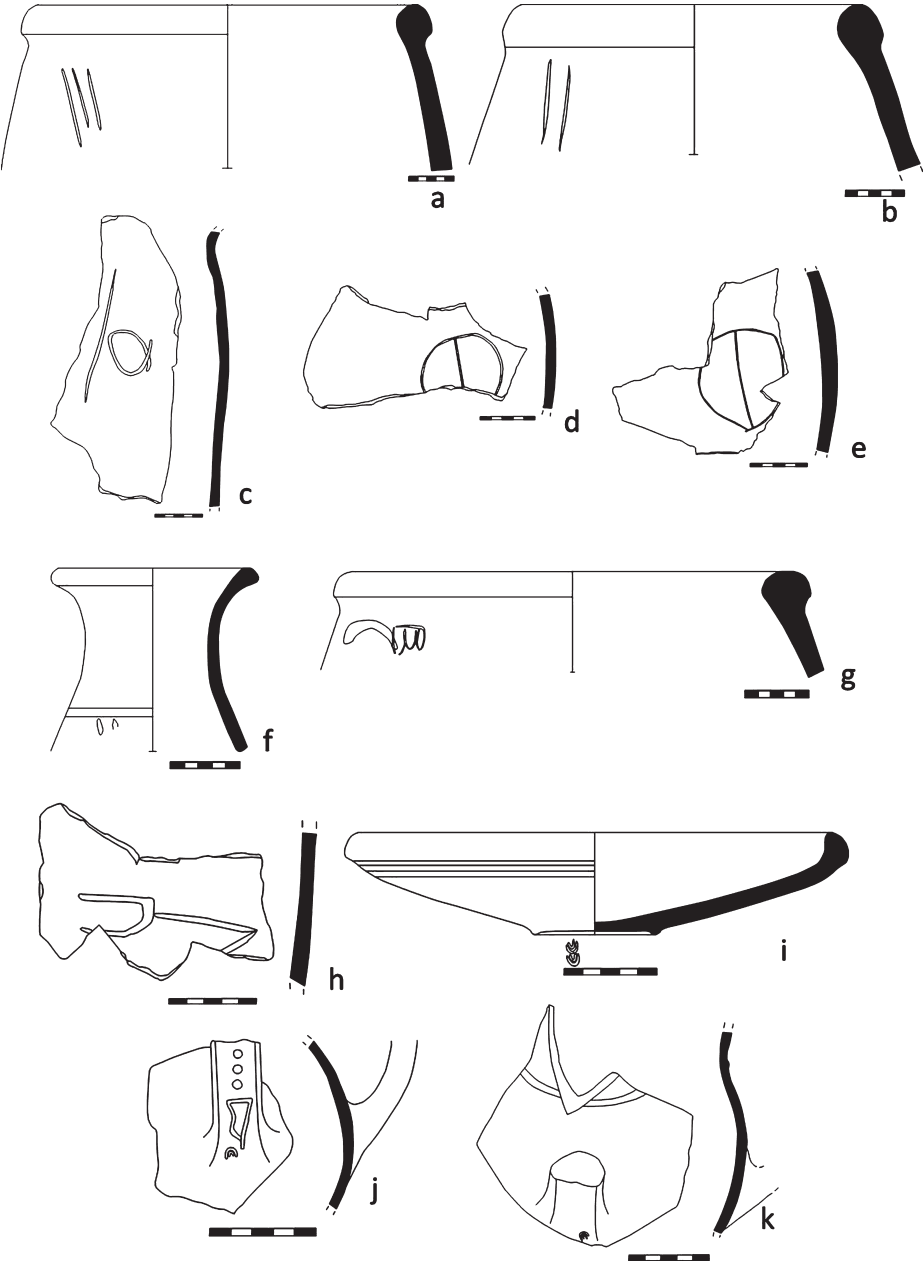
Pl. 3. Drawing of pottery marks from Ayanis.



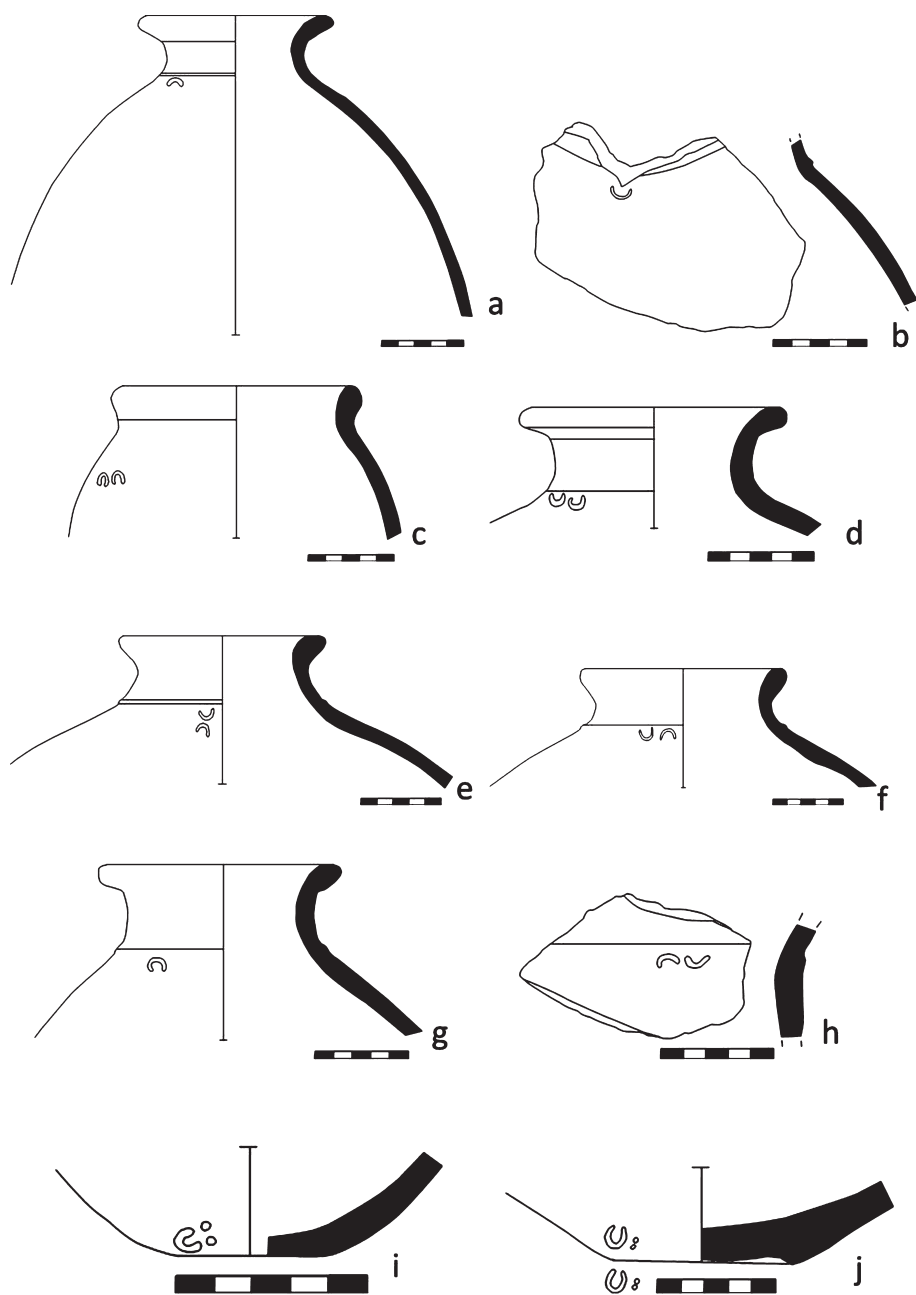
Pl. 4. Drawing of pottery marks from Ayanis.



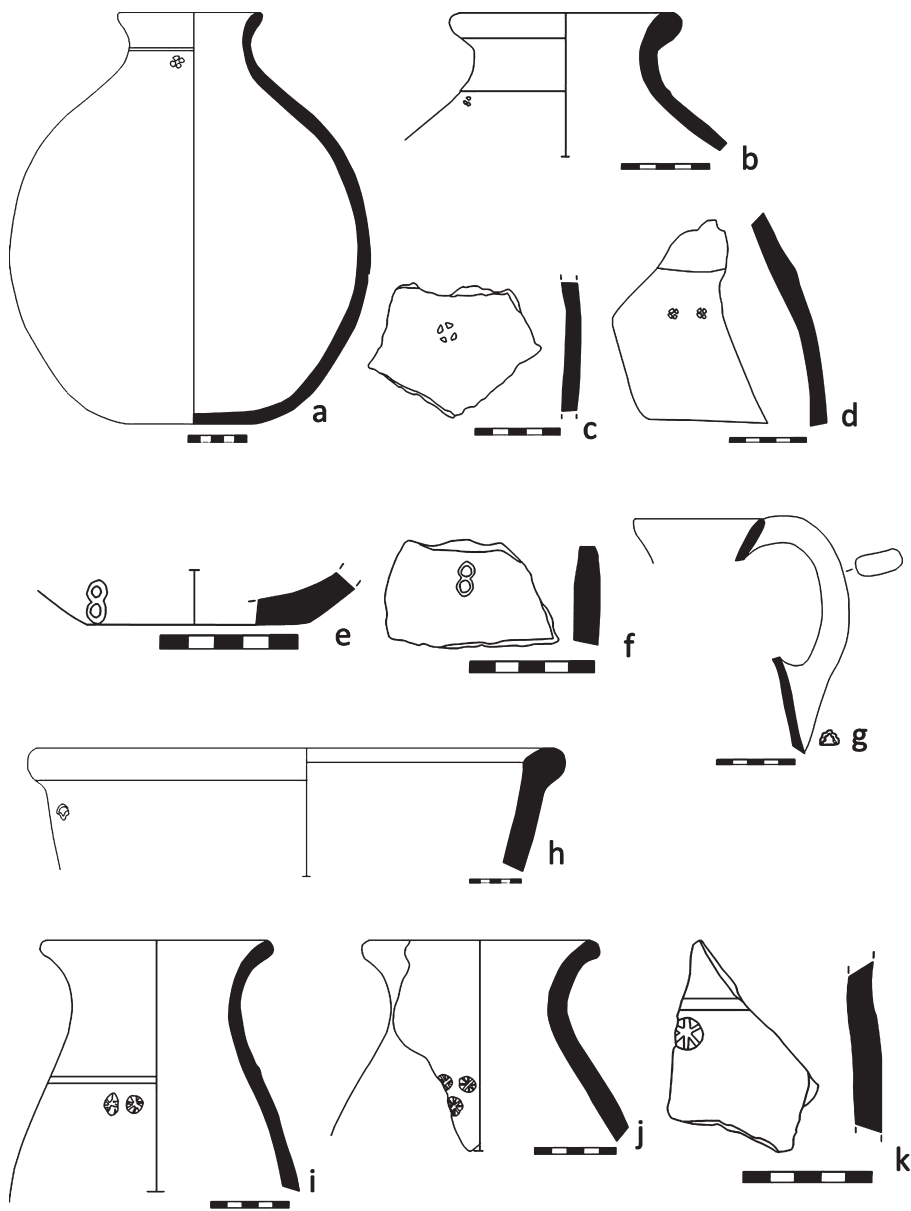
Pl. 5. Drawing of pottery marks from Ayanis.



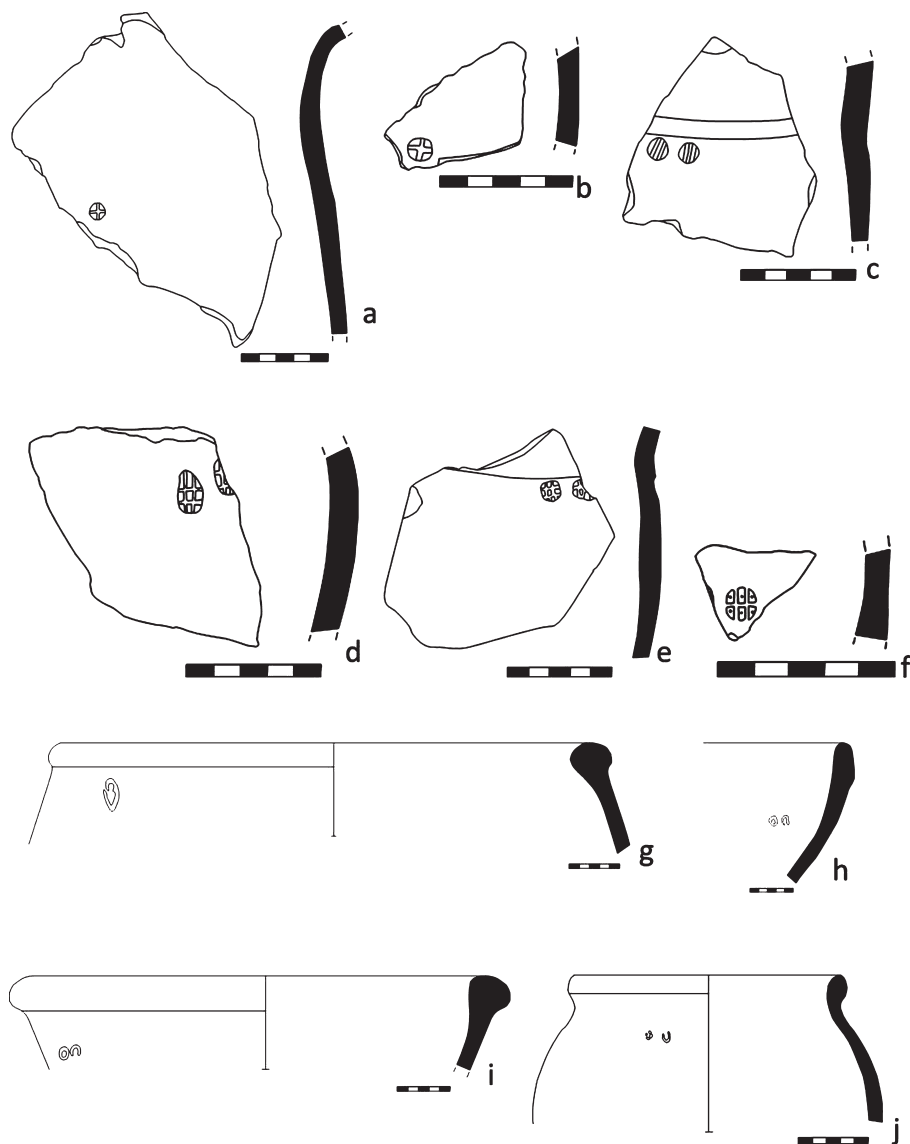
Pl. 6. Drawing of pottery marks from Ayanis.



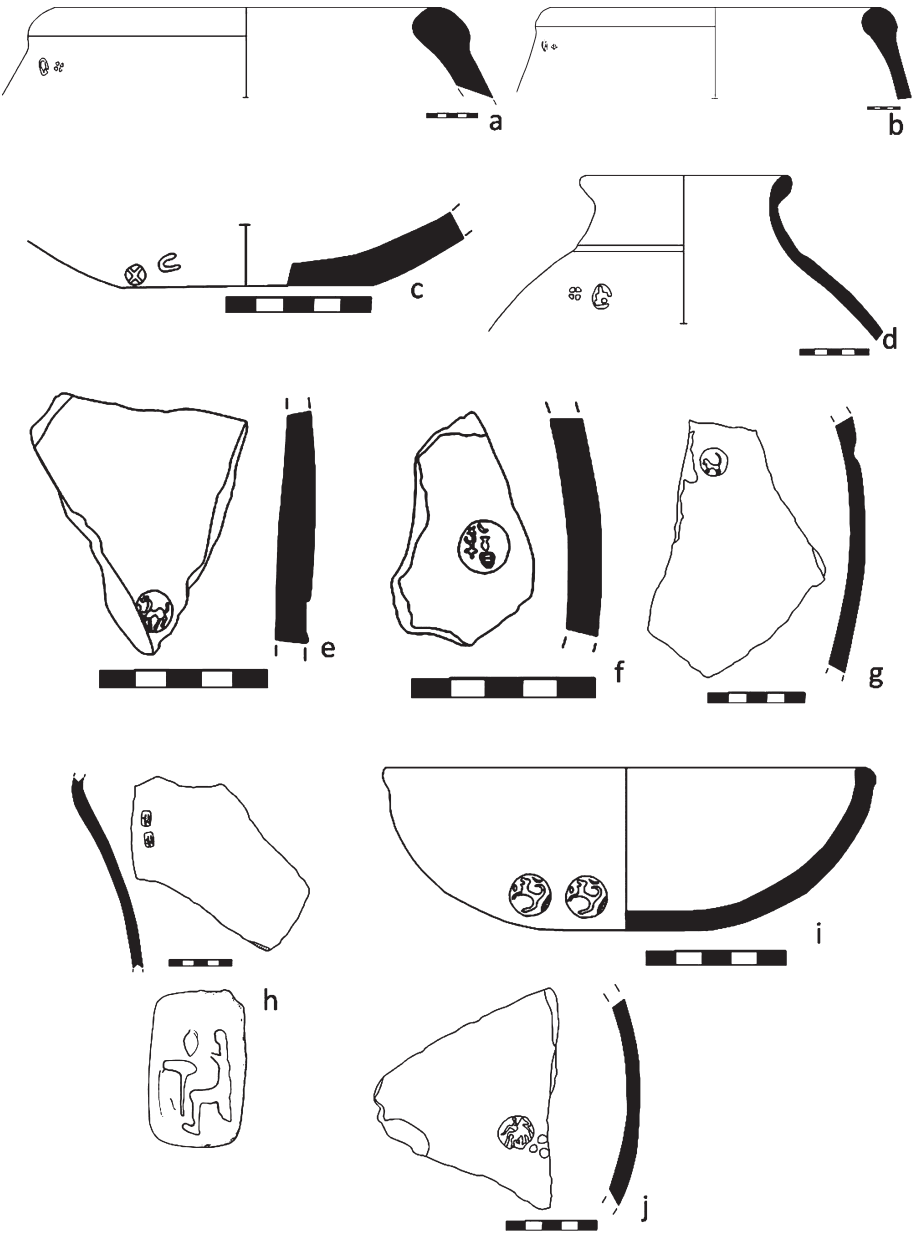
Pl. 7. Drawing of pottery marks from Ayanis.



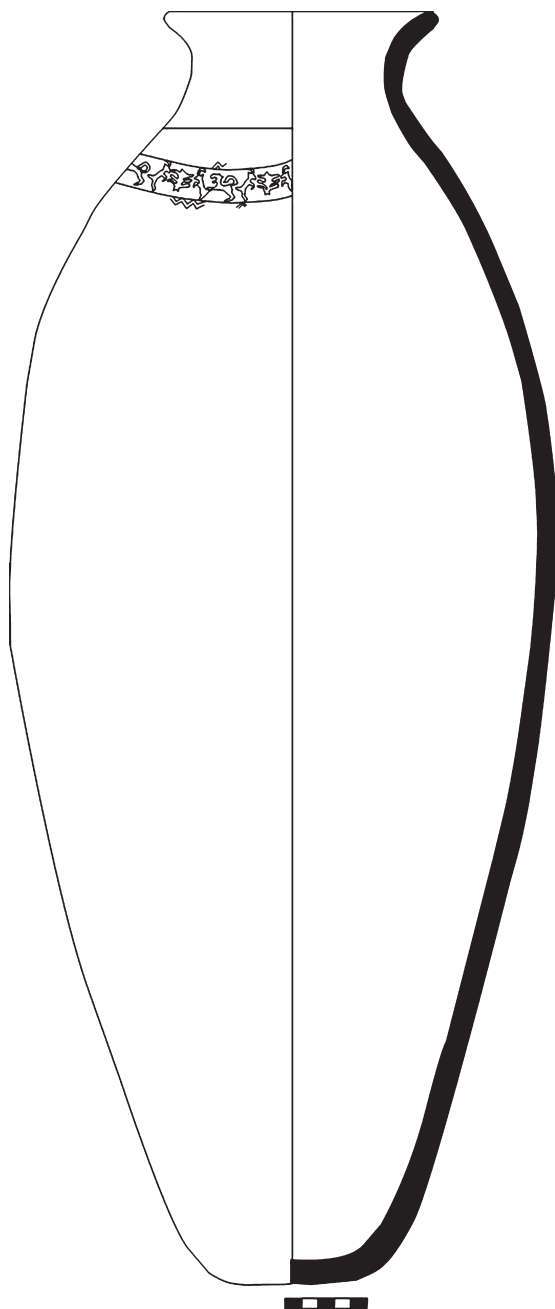
Pl. 8. Drawing of pottery marks from Ayanis.



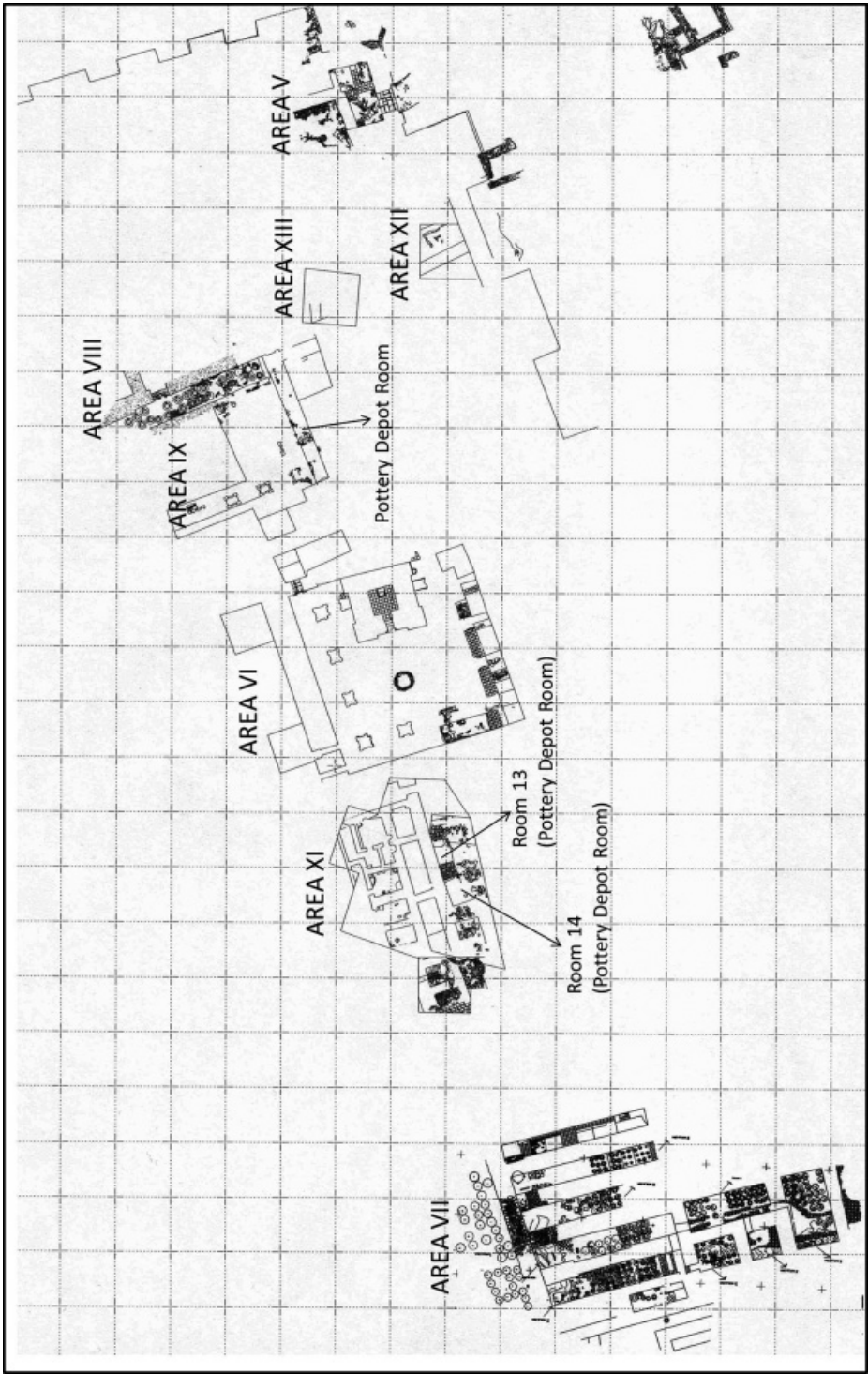
Pl. 9. Drawing of pottery marks from Ayanis.









































Pl. 10. Drawing of pottery marks from Ayanis.



Pl. 11. Drawing of pottery marks from Ayanis.



Pl. 12. Plan of Ayanis Fortress.

Pot Mark	Ware	Form	Find Spot
	Red Burnished	Trefoil Jug Simple Jug Bowl	Area XI: Room 13
	Red Burnished	Trefoil Jug Bowl	Area XI: Room 13
	Brown	Jar	Area XI: Room 13
	Buff	Bowl	Area XI: Room 13
	Red Burnished	Trefoil Jug Simple Jug Bowl	Area XI: Room 13
	Red Burnished	Goblet	Area XI: Room 13
	Red Burnished	Trefoil Jug Simple Jug Jar Bowl Pithos	Area IX: Pottery Depot Room Area XI: Rooms 2, 4, 7, 8, 13 Outer Town: Glueytepe
	Brown Pink Buff Red Burnished	Jar Pithos	Area IX: Pottery Depot Room Area XI: Rooms 4, 7, 8, 13, 14 Outer Town: Glueytepe
	Brown	Jar	Area IX: Pottery Depot Room
	Brown Pink	Jar Pithos	Area XI: Rooms 2, 7
	Red Burnished	Jug	Area XI: Rooms 7, 8, 11
	Brown	Jar Pithos	Area XI: Rooms 7, 8
	Brown	Pithos	Area IX: Pottery Depot Room Area XI: Room 4 Area XII
	Brown	Jar	Area XI: Room 14
	Brown	Jar	Area XI: Room 14
	Brown	Jar	Area XI: Room 14
	Brown	Jar	Area XI: Room 14
	Brown	Jar	Area XI: Room 14
	Brown	Jar	Area XI: Room 14
	Brown	Jar	Area XI: Room 14
	Brown	Jar	Area XI: Room 14
	Brown	Jar	Area XI: Room 14
	Brown	Jar	Area XI: Room 14
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	Brown	Jar	Area XI: Room 14
	Brown	Jar	Area XI: Room 14
	Brown	Jar	Area XI: Room 14
	Brown	Jar	Area XI: Room 14
	Brown	Jar	Area XI: Room 14

Pl. 13. Table of pottery marks from Ayanis.



Pl. 14. Pictures of some pottery marks from Ayanis.

THE MEDIAN *LOGOS* OF HERODOTUS AND THE PERSIANS' LEGITIMATE RULE OF ASIA¹

By

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Abstract: In *Histories* 1.95-130, in a narrative about Cyrus the Great and the rise of the Persians to the hegemony of Asia attributed to Persian sources, Herodotus relates how the rule of (Upper) Asia, first held by the Assyrians, passed to Persian hands following Cyrus' conquest of the Medes, whose power had grown to encompass the near-entirety of the territories formerly controlled by the Assyrians.

This representation of Persian rule over Asia as a successor to former Assyrian and Median regimes, which is also attested in Ctesias, has long been presumed to reflect a Persian view of history that sought to promote the legitimacy of Persian imperial rule as heir to preceding major Near Eastern powers. On the other hand, one long-traditional view of Herodotean historiography has continued to hold that this interpretation of the history of Asia could have been, more than anything else, a reflection of Greek, possibly Herodotean, historical thought.

This paper aims to clarify some of the historiographic ambiguities that have so far stood in the way of a straightforward recognition of the historical sequence of three Asiatic kingdoms as a Persian construct.

Keywords: Herodotus, Medes, Persia, legitimacy, kingship, Asia

¹ The present paper constitutes a summary announcement of results of the author's research on the impact of Persian rhetoric on sources for the emergence of the Persian empire. A shorter version was delivered in one of the Iranian sessions held in honor of Professor David Stronach in the Annual Meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research, San Francisco, 17 November 2011. Warmest thanks are owed to Raphael Sealey for comments at an early stage of the formulation of the ideas presented here, to David Stronach for reading the present final draft and helpful comments concerning the current evidence on the extent of the Median state and to Michael Weiskopf for useful bibliographical references. I also wish to express my appreciation to Sabrina Maras for her excellent organization of the ASOR Iranian sessions and associated events and for kindly inviting me to participate.

References to the Greek text of Herodotus are to the Oxford (OCT) edition (Hude 1927). I usually follow the translation of George Rawlinson (1942).

The three-kingdom sequence and its Herodotean context: earlier interpretations

In *Histories* 1.95.1, following the conquest of the Lydian kingdom of Croesus by Cyrus the Great, Herodotus sets out to relate “who this Cyrus was who conquered the *archē* (“rule”) of Croesus, and in what manner the Persians became masters of Asia”. The relevant narrative, stated to follow Persian authorities, may be divided into two sections. The account proper about the background of Cyrus and his ultimate conflict with and victory over Astyages (the last Median king and, according to the account transmitted in Herodotus, Cyrus’ maternal grandfather), which putatively made Cyrus and the Persians masters of Asia (1.130.2: ἐπὶ Ἀστυάγεος οἱ Πέρσαι τε καὶ ὁ Κῦρος ἐπαναστάντες τοῖσι Μήδοισι ἦρχον τὸ ἀπὸ τοῦτου τῆς Ἀσίας), is presented in the second section (1.107-1.130). The earlier part of the narrative (1.95.2-107.1), the so-called Median *logos*, offers a survey of the history of the Median kingdom to the accession of Astyages which, taken together with the account about Cyrus, patently oversimplifies the political history of the region. The Median tribes, we are told, were able to break free from the yoke of the Assyrians, who had held the rule of Upper Asia for a period of 520 years; were united into a single Median kingdom under the wise man Deioces; then, brought under their sway, first, the Persians and, by the time of the accession of Astyages, the near entirety of the territory, which was formerly controlled by the Assyrians, and which was to pass to Cyrus, subject to his conquest of the Medes.

Herodotus’ description of a successive Assyrian, Median, and Persian political ascendancy over the same expansive Asiatic domain, which is alternately referred to in his text as ‘Upper Asia’ and ‘Asia’, leaves a lot to be desired in terms of historical and geographical accuracy. The neat linear sequence of three Asiatic kingdoms may still be cogently explained as an instance, the earliest known one at that, of a more pervasive propagandistic approach to ‘world’ history as a succession of empires which finds various expressions in Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman period writings (see, e.g., Metzler 1975: 443; Wiesehöfer 2003, both with further references).

Being attested initially in Herodotus and in the slightly later, and probably independent (see, e.g., Goossens 1940: 28; Lenfant 1996), account of Ctesias, in both instances with reference to Persia and the ‘empires’ that

preceded it, and in narratives that are expressly stated by their authors to be indebted to Persian sources (for Ctesias, see *FGrHist* 688 F5[4]), the representation of the history of Asia as a sequence of an Assyrian, a Median, and a Persian kingdom — and reformulations of the historiographic *topos* of the succession of ‘world empires’ in later works — would be *a priori* likely to emanate ultimately from a Near Eastern, and, in particular, a Persian, environment. This likelihood has been variously pointed up in the past.

In his commentary about the account of Assyrian history that formed a prelude to Ctesias’ history of Persia, published in 1940, Godefroy Goossens argued for a deliberate assimilation of the extent of Assyrian conquests depicted therein (and including, among others, Lydia and the Pontic region!) with the considerably wider compass of later Persian expansion, as well as for an overall invention of ‘facts’ of Assyrian history in the same account. Goossens attributed the sum of such invented historical details to an official Persian view of Persia and the ‘empires’ that preceded it that “aimed to legitimize the universal dominion of the Achaemenids as heirs to the Median and Assyrian monarchies” (cf. Goossens 1940: 26 and 38). This same scholar pointed to possible indications for a further reformulation of the Assyrian background to the Persian empire in the Seleucid period that could reflect a manipulation of earlier accounts by the Achaemenids’ Seleucid successors, again, as “un moyen d’affirmer [leur] titres” (Goossens 1940: 44).

In yet another exploration of the tradition of the three Asiatic kingdoms, this time, also with reference to the account of Herodotus, Dieter Metzler (1975: 444-446) proposed that the representation of the Persian empire as a successor to the Assyrian and Median polities must have been devised during the reign, and on the behalf, of Cyrus. For it was the latter ruler, who had at once liberated the Persians from the Median yoke, simultaneously conquering the Median kingdom, *and* subdued Babylonia, a domain that Cyrus would have associated (as Metzler inferred from a reference to the Neo-Assyrian monarch Ashurbanipal, as a prototype of political behavior for Cyrus, in a fragment of the Cyrus Cylinder [Walker 1972: 158-159]) with the Assyrians. In this interpretation, the scheme would have been specifically aimed to promote the legitimacy of the rule of the Persian Cyrus over two major political domains of the Near East, in neither one of which he was a natural successor.

These earlier pronouncements in support of the Persian affinities of the historical sequence of three ‘panasiatic’ kingdoms, which is attested in

Herodotus and Ctesias, are not without further reflections in the scholarly literature (see, e.g., Calmeyer 1987: 18-19, who allows, however, for a post-Cyrus date for the emergence of the scheme; Kratz 1991: 197-212 [cited by Wiesehöfer 2003: 392]; Lenfant 2004: LIII-LIV and LXIII, closely echoing the conclusions of Goossens 1940: 26, 38, 44). To date, however, this thesis would seem difficult to validate with any degree of confidence in the absence of direct corroboration from Persian sources.

Limited and problematic though it may be in this respect, the Iranian evidence in and by itself does not preclude a Persian origin of the three-kingdom scheme. Despite arguments to the contrary (notably, Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1988 and 1994; cf. Liverani 2003), the currently available evidence leaves open the possibility of Median rule over the greater part of *at least* northern Iran (see Stronach 2003), if not over much more extended territory both to the west and to the east (see, e.g., Hdt. 1.74; Briant 1984: 85-88; Vogelsang 1992: 176-177; Muscarella 1994: 60-62; Roaf 2003: esp. 20-21; Tuplin 2004) — a condition that could no doubt be thought adequate to justify an official Persian representation of a Median imperial predecessor. Equally, there is no overriding reason for doubting (*pace* Wiesehöfer 2003: 391-393; cf. 2004: 214-215) an actual readiness of the Persians to represent their imperial power, at least in certain contexts, as an heir to previous Assyrian and Median territorial regimes. In the case of the Assyrians, this much is implied, for instance, by the prominent references to the Assyrian legacy in the Babylonian Cylinder of Cyrus (e.g., Metzler 1975: 445; Harmatta 1971b; Kuhrt 1983: 89-93). A parallel substantive Persian appreciation of a preceding Median political visibility (as a part of the image of Persia) might be possible to infer, among others, from preferential references to the Medes, together with the Persians, as the constituents *par excellence* of the Persian realm (Kent 1953: DB I 34-35, 41, 46-47, 66-67) and to the dual, Persian and Median, basis of military support received by Darius on a number of occasions in his struggles against his adversaries for the throne (Kent 1953: DB II 18, 81-82; III 29-30) in the Bisitun inscription. In as much as the three-kingdom scheme is not directly attested, however, in Persian sources, its Persian origin will seemingly always be subject to doubt due to its initial occurrence in a Herodotean context. The problem, as it emerges from prior discussions, is directly connected with the vexing uncertainties that surround Herodotus' sources, his handling of the materials he received from his informants, and the composition of his work.

Herodotus asserts that his account about Cyrus and the rise of the Persians to the rule of Asia follows Persian authorities, and, at least in theory, he could have had access, among others, to Persian informants (cf., e.g., Wells 1923; Drews 1973: 82-83). His sources on Cyrus are not named, however. They are merely qualified as “some of the Persians who desire not to make a fine tale of the story of Cyrus but to tell the truth” (1.95.1) — presumably as opposed to the advocates of the other three versions of the story of Cyrus whose existence Herodotus notes in the same passage but did not care to record. Let alone the uncertainty as to whether or not Herodotus transmits an official tradition (see esp. Murray 1987: 111-115), this lack of specificity (which is characteristic of references to Persian sources throughout his work, cf. 1.1, 1.5, 3.87, 7.12) is responsible (not to count pronouncements that altogether deny the authenticity of the reports) for a feeling that he did not directly consult Persian authorities but relied on non-Persian sources, which, to the best of his knowledge, transmitted information disseminated by the Persians themselves (Lewis [1985] suggested that such ‘Persian’ reports would have been likely transmitted by Greeks in the Persian administration; on the general uncertainty concerning Herodotus’ sources about the Persians, see, more recently, Flower 2006 and West 2011). If Herodotus did not directly consult Persian sources, this leaves open the provenance and quality of his ‘Persian’ report about Cyrus. For instance, the representation of Cyrus as a half-Median prince (which does not tally easily with the emphasis on the Anshanite dynastic background of this ruler in the text of his Babylonian Cylinder [Pritchard 1969: 315-316]), as well as the important role ascribed to the Median general Harpagus in the events that brought about the downfall of Astyages in the Medo-Persian narrative have led to speculation that the reportedly Persian authorities of Herodotus in this instance might be instead a Median source (see, e.g., Murray 1987: 110-111 [suggesting that Herodotus transmits a “Median aristocratic version”], with comments on earlier discussions in a similar sense). On such grounds, the three-kingdom scheme attested in Herodotus — wherein the Medes are elevated to the status of Persia’s sole immediate imperial predecessor — might also owe more to a Median, rather than a Persian, view of history.

To date the licence that Herodotus, as a historian, may have exercised in adapting his source-material to the purposes of his composition also remains in general a moot point. In the case, moreover, of the interpretation of the history of Asia offered in the Medo-Persian *logos*, speculation

about potentially extensive Herodotean interventions would seem to be especially warranted by a characteristic, recurring feature of the account about the Persian empire given in the earlier part of the *Histories*.

Books 1-4, serving as a prelude to the Greek-Persian confrontations related in Books 5-9, recount Persian affairs from the reign of Cyrus the Great to that of Darius the Great, focusing mainly on circumstances of royal accessions and deaths and successive Persian rulers' expansionist undertakings. Within this lengthy Persian sequence, there are embedded — in addition to sections of Greek materials, which evidently offer a parallel introduction to the Greek protagonists of the Greek-Persian conflict related in the work — extensive accounts about peoples and lands attacked by the Persians that are commonly thought to be more or less extraneous to Persian affairs. In 1.6-46.1 and 1.92-94, for instance, framing the account of Cyrus' conquest of the Lydian kingdom, Herodotus presents, in the former section, a survey of the earlier history of Lydia down to the time of Croesus and an account of the affairs of Croesus prior to his confrontation with Cyrus; and, in the latter section, a description of Croesus' offerings to Greek sanctuaries and Lydian marvels and customs. Further on in Book 1, the account of Cyrus' conquest of Babylon (1.188-191) is preceded by a description of this Mesopotamian city, including references to the deeds of two famous Babylonian queens, Semiramis and Nitocris (1.178-187); and is followed by a section on Babylonian resources and customs (1.192-200). The fatal campaign of Cyrus against the Massagetae is equally preceded by chapters on the geography of the regions around Araxes and the Caspian (1.201-204) and followed by a section on the habits and customs of this central Asiatic people (1.215-216). Among further examples of this pattern of composition, the most notable one is that of Egypt, whose geography, culture and earlier history, prefixed to the account of the campaign against, and conquest of, this country by Cambyses (3.1-16), occupy the entirety of Book 2.

Judging by their place in the narrative, these eastern historical and ethnographic sections were occasioned in each instance by Persian attacks against given peoples and lands. So far, however, it has not been possible to establish causal historical connections between these eastern accounts and the actual events of Persian expansion with which they are associated in the narrative scheme of the *Histories*. Explanation for the inclusion of the former accounts has thus been variously sought with reference to Herodotus' historical method and/or the larger aims of his work.

Depending on the varying opinions of different scholars, these sections have been viewed as more or less justifiable “digressions” that could offer, for instance, telltale signs of an earlier phase of Herodotus’ career as a composer of ethnographic *logoi* (Jacoby 1913: cols. 330-331). Or, considering Herodotus’ wider historical-ethnographical interests, they could be apposite to a composition that was conceived of by its author as an ethnographic-historical survey of the Persian empire (e.g., de Sanctis 1926: 294-300; Powell 1939: 39-55; Fornara 1971). For others, they could be germane to overarching patterns of thought that are attested in the *Histories*, such as the preoccupation with the rise and fall of important individuals and states (notably, Immerwahr 1966: 81-86 and 93-98) or the attention devoted throughout the work (and programmatically announced at the opening of the *Histories*) to accounting for the great *erga* (“deeds”) of the barbarians as well as of the Greeks (Drews 1973: 45-96 *passim*).

A consensus about the particular significance of Herodotus’ eastern *logoi* has been difficult to reach so far. Insights, however, gained over the years into connections of the varied materials in question with the larger literary, historical, ethnographic, and philosophical fabric of the *Histories* have led to a now widespread perception that these eastern accounts can be accepted as manifestations of an “ethnographic dimension” of the *Histories* (for the most recent expression of this view, see Lenfant 2011: 25), and as integral elements of a Herodotean, ecumenical view of history that paid attention not only to political and military events but also to origins, as well as the nature and cycles of the affairs of individuals, peoples and states. This general perception directly affects the discussion of the origins of the three-kingdom scheme.

According to one position, the information recorded in *Histories* 1.95.2-130 about the rule of the Assyrians, the early history of the Medes, the background of Cyrus, and Cyrus’ conquest of Media could derive, as a whole, from a single, and, as Herodotus 1.95.1 indicates, Persian (or, at any rate, Iranian) source (see, e.g., Legrand 1970: 106-110; Murray 1987: 110-111) that portrayed a continuum of Medo-Persian history. Such a view would leave room for speculation concerning the Iranian origin of the sequence of the three Asiatic kingdoms depicted in the Median *logos*. General uncertainty, however, about the sources of Herodotus and his treatment of his materials would still allow suppositions that Herodotus may have altered at will the details of the reportedly Persian account. More importantly, the pattern of seemingly intrusive commentaries about the

native affairs of eastern peoples attacked by the Persians throughout his narrative would appear to warrant assumptions that the survey of the history of the Medes could have been combined with the account about Cyrus and his conquest of the Median kingdom on the initiative of, and could have even been concocted by, Herodotus himself.

The latter considerations are not always directly acknowledged in studies of the Median *logos*. They lie nonetheless at the root of certain modern assessments of, for instance, details of Herodotus' portrayal of the emergence of the Median state as having been fashioned after Greek political experience and/or Achaemenid practices that were familiar to Herodotus (e.g., How and Wells 1928: 104; Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1988: 211; Briant 1984: 98 [after Harmatta 1971a: 11-12], cf. 1996: 36; Liverani 2003: 2); of the sequence of Median kings given by Herodotus as having been obtained by Greeks directly from archival Babylonian sources (Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1994, cf. 1988: 210-212); and of the overarching historical/chronological framework making the Assyrians the beginning of the history of Asia in Herodotus' work as a product of Greek historiography and chronography (e.g., Drews 1969; cf. among others, Fowler 1996: 74-76 with further bibliography).

By such reasoning, the three-kingdom scheme would also most likely reflect a Greek, rather than a Persian, approach to history. To mention two variant formulations of this position that are current today, "the series of three universal monarchies", which is reflected in Herodotus' work, was "probably formed in Ionia soon after the fall of Lydia" (Asheri *et al.* 2007: 148-149) or represents a particularly Herodotean "model" or "view" (Wiesehöfer 2003: 393 and 396, respectively followed by e.g., Michels 2011: 693 and n. 24). In the latter case, it would have issued forth, as it has been maintained, from "Herodotus' own global perspective on the history of Asia and the *ecumene*", which was responsible for making "the whole territorial heritage of the Persians' predecessors merge into the Persian empire", and would reflect the focus of Herodotus "on the historical process of the origin, consolidation, erosion, and collapse of the Asian empires, which he causally relates to guilt and fate, responsibility and compulsion of the governing protagonists..." (Wiesehöfer 2003: 393, citing in particular Bichler 2000: 213 ff.).

In as much as the actual sources that Herodotus used for his history of the Persian empire and its Asiatic prehistory remain largely unknown or uncertain, and the accomplishments of his Greek predecessors and

contemporaries are largely enshrouded in obscurity (see, e.g., Fowler 1996 and relevant articles in Luraghi 2001 and Dewald & Marincola 2006), one should be wary of propositions that early Greek historiography possessed an inherent potential to generate both the larger framework and crucial details of the Asiatic background to the emergence of the Persian empire attested in the *Histories*. As we shall see, one should also be wary of contentions that “no theory of the succession of world empires circulated in the East before the Greeks imported it” (Momigliano 1982: 554; cf. Mendels 1981: esp. 338-339 [Addendum]).

The remainder of this discussion looks at the section of Herodotus’ narrative that refers to the rise of Cyrus (and, hence, to the rise of the Persians) to the rule of “all Asia” — a section which, as Herodotus signals at 1.130, encompasses references to the histories of the Lydians and the Medes. It proposes that the text of Herodotus provides (a) indications of the integrity of the supposedly intrusive commentaries and (b) grounds for the recognition of an overall Persian bias in Herodotus’ treatment of the history of pre-Achaemenid Asia and ‘his’ three-kingdom scheme.

The two rules of Asia

Histories 1.130.2-3, concluding the account of Cyrus’ conquest of the Medes, makes an expansive claim of Cyrus the Great’s rule over “all Asia” in terms of his conquest of only two kingdoms: “[I]n Astyages’ time”, we are told, “the Persians and Cyrus rose in revolt against the Medes, and from this time ruled Asia (ἤρχον τὸ ἀπὸ τοῦτου τῆς Ἀσίας)... and afterwards... he [i.e., Cyrus] subdued Croesus... and after this victory he became sovereign of all Asia (πάσης τῆς Ἀσίας ἥρξε)”. The passage, grossly exaggerating the overall extent of the Asiatic territory conquered by Cyrus (and in general by the Persians), is also in contradiction with specific reports of Persian campaigns against the coastal districts of Asia Minor (1.141-170 [Ionians/Aeolians] and 1.171-176 [Carians, Caunians, Lycians]), Babylon (1.188-191), and the Massagetae (1.201-214), all of them presented in the remainder of Book 1, and seemingly all postdating the victories of Cyrus over Croesus and Astyages (for the chronological problems pertaining to Cyrus’ campaigns, see e.g., Briant 1996: 44-45, Bichler 2000: 213-214). In an attempt to account, at least in part, for the historical inconsistencies engendered in the testimony of the 1.130 passage, one might assume that the reference to Cyrus as a lord of

Asia following the defeat of Astyages was meant as “a programmatic declaration” (cf. Briant 1996: 44). The point is, however, that the Herodotean narrative was not concerned in this instance with the *actual* course of Persian expansion. The claim of Cyrus’ rise to the rule of “all Asia” as a consequence of his conquest of (only) Croesus and Astyages’ kingdoms belonged in the ideological domain.

In 1.6.1 Croesus is identified as the lord (*tyrannos*) of “all the nations within [i.e., to the west of] the river Halys (ἐντὸς Ἄλυος ποταμοῦ; cf. 1.28)”. In 1.130.1 the Medes are stated, in turn, to have “ruled over the parts of Asia above [i.e., to the east of] the river Halys (τῆς ἄνω Ἄλυος ποταμοῦ Ἀσίης)...” (cf. 1.103.2: [Cyaxares] ὁ τὴν Ἄλυος ποταμοῦ ἄνω Ἀσίην πᾶσαν συστήσας ἐωυτῷ, “[Cyaxares] who brought under his dominion the whole of Asia above [i.e., to the east of] the river Halys”). Herodotus was just as aware as his modern critics (e.g., Rollinger 2003: 305-313) that these statements were not meant to offer a precise representation of the territories under Lydian and Median rule in the time of Cyrus (in 1.28 Cilicia and Lycia, both of them perceived as being located to the west of the Halys, are excluded from the domain of Croesus; references to a Babylonian kingdom that was independent from that of the Medes in the part of Asia to the east of the Halys are given in 1.178-191, cf. 1.74.3). Defined as encompassing, respectively, the territories to the west and to the east of the river Halys (cf. 1.72.2), the *archai* of Croesus and Astyages conquered by Cyrus are clearly assimilated in these contexts with Lower and Upper Asia, the two conceptual components of Persia’s Asiatic realm. The histories of the kingdoms of Croesus and Astyages, narrated in sequence in 1.6-92.1 and 1.95.2-130, were arguably also concerned with these two conceptual domains. They defined two separate lines of rule that existed on either side of the Halys at the outset of Persian expansion and accounted for their rightful takeover by Cyrus.

The theme of sovereignty (*archē*), which is repeatedly evoked in the 1.130 passage, framed both the Lydian and the Median account and determined the scope of their historical materials. Beginning at 1.6.1 with a statement of Croesus’ credentials as a *tyrannos* and his geographical domain of rule (ἐθνέων τῶν ἐντὸς Ἄλυος ποταμοῦ [i.e., “Lower Asia”]), the Lydian narrative proceeds to relate the manner in which the latter *archē*, whose origins were traced to the offsprings of Lydus (1.7.3), passed, first, to Croesus’ family following 22 generations (or 505 years) of Heraclid kingship (1.7.4); then, to Croesus himself, following a succession of

a further four Mermnad rulers (1.14-26.1); and, finally, to Cyrus and the Persians (1.86.1; cf. 1.92.1 and 1.94.7). The inclusion of materials about the early history of Lydia out of a specific interest in the history/transmission of the Lydian *archē* is most clearly enunciated in the opening and closing phrases of the section about the Heraclids:

- 1.7.1: ἡ δὲ ἡγεμονία οὕτω περιῆλθε, ἐοῦσα Ἡρακλειδέων, ἐς τὸ γένος τὸ Κροίσου
 “the sovereignty (*hēgemoniē*), which had belonged to the Heraclids, passed into the family of Croesus in the manner which I will now relate”
- 1.14.1: τὴν μὲν δὴ τυραννίδα οὕτω ἔσχον οἱ Μερμνάδαι τοὺς Ἡρακλείδας ἀπελόμενοι
 “such was the way in which the Mermnads deposed the Heraclids, and themselves obtained the sovereignty (*tyrannis*)”

Putting aside the often lengthy sections of narrative concerned with the Greek world (e.g., encounters of the Greek cities of the western coast of Asia Minor and the Greek mainland with the Mermnad rulers, and digressions on Peloponnesian and Athenian history) that are intertwined with the Lydian historical sequence, confusing its basic meaning, the materials that Herodotus records about the history of Lydia composed, as his closing remark also indicates, first and foremost a history of the *archē* of Croesus (or the *archē* of Lower Asia): κατὰ μὲν δὴ τὴν Κροίσου τε ἀρχὴν ... ἔσχε οὕτω, “[s]uch was the fate ... of the *archē* of Croesus” (1.92.1).²

In its various formulations as *archē*, *tyrannis*, *basilēiē* and *hēgemoniē*, the theme of sovereignty is featured just as prominently in the opening and closing phrases and the historical references of the Medo-Persian *logos*.

² In Hdt. 1.92.1 (κατὰ μὲν δὴ τὴν Κροίσου τε ἀρχὴν καὶ Ἰωνίης τὴν πρώτην καταστροφὴν ἔσχε οὕτω or “[s]uch was the fate of the *archē* of Croesus and the first enslavement of Ionia”) the parallel mention of the “first enslavement of Ionia” refers to the narrative about Ionian/Greek affairs which, in the opinion of the present author, was grafted onto the Lydian sequence (from the outset of the Lydian *logos*, see 1.6.2-3) by Herodotus or his source(s) owing to the particular interest of the Greek historiographic tradition in Greek affairs and/or Herodotus’ own aim (1.5.3, cf. 1.6.2) to “point out” from the very beginning of his account of the Greek-Persian confrontation that “the person (i.e., Croesus)” was the first to his knowledge to have “commenced aggressions against the Greeks”.

The account is introduced with a statement of Herodotus' intention to relate "in what manner the Persians came to rule Asia" (1.95.1: τοὺς Πέρσας ὅτεω τρόπῳ ἡγήσαντο τῆς Ἀσίας) and concludes with Cyrus' accession to the *archē* of the Medes/Asia (1.130.1-2). As in the case of the Lydian sequence, it deals in order with the origins of this *archē* (it was initially held by the Assyrians for 520 years [1.95.2: Ἀσσυρίων ἀρχόντων τῆς ἄνω Ἀσίας ἐπ' ἔτεα εἴκοσι καὶ πεντακόσια]) and its subsequent history down to the time of Cyrus. Opening the survey of the Median dynasty, the story of Deioces, who "became infatuated with tyrannical rule" (1.96.2: ἐρασθεὶς τυραννίδος) and "collected the Medes into a nation and ruled (ἥρξε) over them" (1.101), served to set the stage, as Herodotus anticipates, for the re-imposition of sovereign authority over the Medes and the other nations that had succeeded in liberating themselves from the yoke of the Assyrians (1.96.1: ἐόντων δὲ αὐτονόμων πάντων ἀνὰ τὴν ἡπειρον ὧδε αὐτὶς ἐς τυραννίδας περιῆλθον, "while all the nations in the continent were self-governed, they thus fell again under the sway of 'tyrannies'"). The entirety of the Median dynastic sequence is referred thus to the theme of Asiatic *archē*. The details of the ensuing commentary (1.102-106) about Deioces' successors, Phraortes and Cyaxares, are more or less strictly concerned with the history of rule in Upper Asia. They focus on Median expansion, and in particular on Median attacks upon, and ultimate capture of, Nineveh (1.102.2, 1.103.2-3, 1.106.2); on the Medes' temporary loss of their sovereignty to the Scythians, who invaded Media, and "became masters of all Asia" (1.104.2: οἱ μὲν Μηδοὶ ... τῆς ἀρχῆς κατελύθησαν, οἱ δὲ Σκύθαι τὴν Ἀσίην πᾶσαν ἐπέσχον) for twenty-eight years (1.106.1); and on the eventual reinstatement of the Medes to their former dominion (1.106.2: οὕτω ἀνεσώσαντο τὴν ἀρχὴν Μηδοὶ καὶ ἐπεκράτεον τῶν περ καὶ πρότερον). The remainder of the account (1.107-130), dealing with the reign of the last Median king, Astyages, "has as sole incident", as Myres (1953: 93) and others recognized, "the emergence of Cyrus" and, as Herodotus (1.95.1 and 1.130) specifies, his accession to the Asiatic *archē* of the Assyrians and the Medes.

Earlier seen as perhaps a normal (or unavoidable) element of ethnographic *logoi* (i.e., as mere chronographic markers) or as parts of an overarching chronological framework that emerged, *inter alia*, from Greek chronographers' attempts to correlate Asiatic with Greek history (e.g., Drews 1969, cf. 1973: 27-28; Helm 1981: e.g., 87, with n. 27 on pp. 89-90, and 88; Asheri *et al.* 2007: 79-80 note on 7.1, cf. 30 [Introduction] and 148

note on 95.2; but see also Brown 1988: 83), dynastic sequences and the regularly noted time spans of political regimes (of states, dynasties and kings) defined, in each of the two *logoi*, a continuum of kingship from the earliest remembered (or earliest expedient) moment of the institution until the enthronement of Cyrus.

Colorful tales about Lydian and Median rulers, which disrupt and diversify the chronological presentations of successive dynasties, kings and conquests, fell in with the same scheme (*pace* Murray 1987: 112, and others). They punctuated new dynastic beginnings; patched up discontinuities in the standard, hereditary transmission of rule; sanctioned newcomers' aspirations to kingship; all along anticipating the arrival of Cyrus and his legitimate acquisition of the Lydian and the Median throne — or the rule of Lower and Upper Asia.

Lydian and Median royal tales: Persian perspectives

Oblivious of the activities, and even the names, of the descendants of Lydus, the Lydian *logos* also passes up in silence the history of the twenty-two-generation-long line of Heraclid kings, pausing exceptionally on Agron and Candaules, whose reigns marked, respectively, the beginning and the end of Heraclid rule. In both instances, moreover, the commentary is exclusively concerned with the corresponding disruptions in the hereditary transmission of royal authority and their justification. Lacking blood-ties with the descendants of Lydus, who ruled Lydia formerly, the Heraclid dynasty founded by Agron was “confirmed on the throne by an oracle” (1.7.4: ἔσχον τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐκ θεοπροπίου). The end of Heraclid rule — which, as Herodotus stresses, was (also) transmitted over the course of 22 generations “from father to son” (1.7.4: παῖς παρὰ πατρός ἐκδεκόμενος τὴν ἀρχήν) — and transfer of power to the Mermnads was accommodated by another oracular utterance. It sanctioned, this time, the accession on the throne of the founder of the Mermnad house, Gyges (1.13.1: [Gyges] ἔσχε ... τὴν βασιληίην καὶ ἐκρατύνθη ἐκ τοῦ ἐν Δελφοῖσι χρηστηρίου, [Gyges] obtained...the kingship and was confirmed [in the possession of the throne] by an answer of the Delphic oracle”). At the same time, a decree of fate and a tale of popular morality placed responsibility for the demise of Heraclid authority on the predisposition and actions of the last, violently deposed Heraclid king. “Fated to end ill” (1.8.2: χρῆν γὰρ Κανδαύλη γενέσθαι κακῶς), Candaules was killed, we are told, by

Gyges (his “bodyguard”) at the instigation of the queen, because Candaules had forced Gyges to watch her naked against ancestral custom (1.8.3-4, 1.11.3).

Oracular utterances, disastrous repercussions of moral transgression, and workings of destiny —the very same set of principles evoked in the earlier part of the Lydian *logos* in order to justify the irregular transfer of political authority from the family of Lydus to the Heraclids and from the Heraclids to the Mermnads— are also instrumental in the culminating episode of the Lydian account, the story of Croesus and his encounters with Solon and Cyrus. They are evoked to justify the transfer of rule from the last Mermnad ruler to the Persian Cyrus. The famous series of oracles (1.13.2; 1.46.2-50; 1.53-56.1; 1.75.2; 1.91) that were ignored or misinterpreted by Croesus anticipated and sanctioned (in the however cryptic language of oracles) the accession of a foreigner, Cyrus, to the Lydian throne against the hereditary prerogative of a native Lydian king. The earliest such oracle —the one that neither Croesus nor any of his Mermnad predecessors took any account of until it was fulfilled (1.13.2) — dated, allegedly, from the time of Gyges. It alluded to the future arrival of Cyrus as divine vengeance foretold for the demise of the Heraclids to be visited on Gyges’ posterity in the fifth generation (that of Croesus) (1.13.2: Ἡρακλείδῃσι τίσις ἥξει ἐς τὸν πέμπτον ἀπόγονον Γύγεω; cf. 1.91.1). Being mentioned for the first time in the earlier part of the Lydian *logos*, in the commentary about Gyges, the latter oracle makes plain the running bias of the history of Lydian kingship recorded by Herodotus in favor of the representation of Cyrus as a legitimate successor on the Lydian throne. Predicted by oracular utterances, the downfall of Croesus was further sealed, as in the case of Candaules, by his own moral transgression (*hybris*, ‘arrogance’) — which is made manifest by his exchanges with Solon and the tragedy of Atys (1.29-45, esp. 1.34.1; cf. Immerwahr 1966: 83) — and Fate. As Croesus was advised by the Pythian priestess following his demise, “[i]t is not possible even for a god to escape the decree of destiny” (1.91.1: τὴν πεπρωμένην μοῖραν ἀδύνατά ἐστι ἀποφυγεῖν καὶ θεῶ).

Croesus’ arrogance and his blindness to the significance of divine warnings have been extensively analyzed as integral elements of the literary and philosophical-moralizing framework of the *Histories* and as reflections of the conventions of Greek tragedy in Herodotus’ work (see, e.g., more recently, Kornarou 2004 and Griffin 2006, both with earlier bibliography). The tradition about Croesus conveyed in the Lydian *logos* reverberates

nonetheless with a Persian political bias. The aspersions cast on the moral conduct of the lawful Lydian king, the sustained negation of supernatural favor to his rule in deference to a divinely foretold predominance of Cyrus, as well as the recurring insistence upon Croesus' responsibility for the confrontation with Cyrus (1.46.1, 47.1, 53.1, 54.1, 73-75.2) — a confrontation that led to the Persian conquest of Lydia — effectively acquitted the Persian conqueror of all responsibility for the disruption of the native Lydian socio-political order, simultaneously supplying justification for his newly acquired Anatolian rule. The emphatic assertion that Cyrus did not (ultimately) put to death the Lydian king (1.86-88), which would appear to be belied, moreover, by another preserved tradition about the fate of Croesus (cf. Kuhrt 2007: 180, with reference to the version of Croesus' self immolation and supernaturally effected disappearance attested by the Greek lyric poet Bacchylides [Maehler 1982: F3]), may well subscribe to the same justificatory logic. It could be meant to alleviate detrimental charges of regicide that were bound to be leveled against the Persians (just as they had been against Gyges and his Mermnad successors: 1.13, 1.91.1) by local factions opposed to Persian rule.

Turning to the Medo-Persian *logos*, the concern of the Median dynastic tales with the legitimacy of Cyrus is more easily discernible in the tale of Astyages. Therein, 'prophetic' dreams, the details depicting the background of Cyrus, and an emphasis on the contrasting personal qualities of the Persian conqueror and the last Median king, all readily lend themselves to an interpretation as complementary expressions of divine, moral, and ideological grounds for Cyrus' eventual 'legitimate' succession.

Dreams of water flowing from Astyages' daughter, Mandane, in a quantity that could "fill his city and overflow all Asia" (1.107.1), and "a vine that grew from Mandane and covered the whole of Asia" (1.108.1), are reasoned in our text as causes for Astyages' fear that he might be displaced by his daughter's still unborn son (1.108) and his subsequent cruel behavior toward Cyrus. Their motifs could also function in a legitimation context as 'proof' of Cyrus' "predestined", hence supernaturally sanctioned, "conquest of all of Asia" (wording Cizek 1975: 540) and the equally supernaturally ordained overthrow of his alleged Median grandfather (cf. 1.127.2 wherein the characterization of Astyages as θεοβλαβής imputes his downfall to the clouding of his senses by the god(s) [Immerwahr 1966: 162]).

Cyrus' alleged exposure as an infant, the subsequent revelation of his 'true' identity as the grandson of Astyages and reinstatement to his rightful

position, and his eventual establishment of a new order, are all recognized as elements of a widely popular heroic leader motif. The whole bears closest similarities with extant formulations of the ‘birth legend’ of the late-third-millennium Mesopotamian ‘world’ conqueror, Sargon of Akkad (see, esp. Drews 1974 and Kuhrt 2003), a legend which apparently enjoyed considerable official favor in Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian discourse on the ‘right to rule’. It was especially popular in the reigns of his late-eighth-century Assyrian namesake, Sargon II (Lewis 1980), and Cyrus’ contemporary, Nabonidus (Kuhrt 2003: 355), each of whom owned, like Sargon of Akkad, a once shaky claim to royal authority. Royal Persian interest in the cult of the Akkadian ruler in the reigns of Cyrus and Cambyses (Kennedy 1969; cf. Kuhrt 2003: 356), combined with indications that the motif, rather than representing merely a popular Mesopotamian folk tradition (Drews 1974), could function at an official level, led to the suggestion that the adaptation of the legend in the case of Cyrus was likely fostered, even by Cyrus himself, in connection with his accession to the Babylonian throne (Kuhrt 2003: 354-356). In this regard, the fusion of the personality of Cyrus with that of the Mesopotamian hero of antiquity has been specifically interpreted as having been meant to convey an image of Cyrus “as the ‘true king’ of the universe, whose right to rule Babylonia had existed from birth” (Kuhrt 2003: 356). This motif, however, which was evidently popular in an Assyrian imperialist context, and which is attested in Herodotus in a narrative that posits a Persian accession to the rule of Upper Asia that was initially held by the Assyrians, may well have been more broadly connected with Cyrus’ claims to the former Assyrian *archē*.

Occurring in the same historically tendentious, legitimation context, Cyrus’ otherwise unconfirmed (and even denied by Ctesias, *FGrHist* 688 F9[1]) half-Median royal descent — which bears, significantly, on the crucial requirement of direct, bloodline transmission of legitimate rule — is equally likely to have been deliberately fostered as a means of masking Cyrus’ irregular accession, this time, to the Median throne (cf., e.g., Metzler 1975, Briant 1984: 75 [cf. 1996: 34-35], Lenfant 1996: 368-369, and the analogous claim of Cambyses’ half-Egyptian royal descent in an Egyptian context in Herodotus 3.1-2).

Astyages’ impulsive and cruel behavior toward Cyrus (1.108.3-4), Harpagus (1.118-119) and the Magi (1.128.2), which stands as a counterpart to the moral transgressions of Croesus and Candaules, and Cyrus’ representation, as in the Lydian *logos*, as an “instrument of providential

nemesis” (wording Cizek 1975: 540), have been analyzed so far as manifestations of the moral dimension of Greek/Herodotean historical vision. They might equally be understood, however, as *a priori* salient ingredients of a story belonging in the realm of Near Eastern political justifications. The particular system of values that predicated Cyrus’ ‘rightful’ displacement of the lawful native monarch in this instance, and the overall Iranian and Mesopotamian spirit that guided the justification of Cyrus’ takeover of the rule of the Medes and (Upper) Asia, find initial reflections and further clarification in the tale of Deioces.

Earlier scholarship has dealt extensively with the ambivalent merits of the Herodotean story of the Median layman, Deioces — who allegedly succeeded in uniting under his absolute authority the several autonomous, village-based communities of the Medes, founding a Median institution of kingship — as a ‘document’ for early Median history (for different approaches in this respect, see, among others, Helm 1981; Brown 1988; Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1988; Briant 1996: 36-37 and 908-909 [notes documentaries]; Liverani 2003; Meier e.a. 2004; Tuplin 2004). Posing as Median history, the acts (and personality) of Deioces, and the Median *logos* as a whole, may well represent instead, as Helm (1981: e.g. 87; cf. Brown 1988: 79) first argued, a combination of elements of heroic oral sagas from a Median and more generally Iranian past. The relevance of the tale to the Persian report about Cyrus, of which it purports to form a part in Herodotus, has also often been doubted in the past on account of echoes of Greek political circumstances and/or Herodotean improvisations that have been ‘recognized’ in its contents. Thus, the organization of the Medes into several separate villages (1.96.2: κατὰ κώμας) before the enthronement of Deioces, and the single large city (1.98.3: ἐν πόλῳ) of Ecbatana created on his demand upon his rise to power, have been understood as reflections of a Greek model of state formation (How and Wells 1928: 104). References to the ‘tyrant’s’ friends (1.97.2: οἱ τοῦ Δηϊόκεω φίλοι), bodyguard of spearbearers (1.98.2: κρατῦναι αὐτὸν δορυφόροις), and spies (1.100.2: καὶ οἱ κατάσκοποι τε καὶ κατήκοοι ἦσαν ἀνὰ πᾶσαν τὴν χώραν τῆς ἡρχε) have been suggested to be “parts of the ordinary Greek ‘Tyrant’s progress’” (e.g., How and Wells 1928: 104; cf. Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1988: 211 and Liverani 2003: 2). Or, simultaneous similarities of the worldly trappings of Deioces’ kingship — such as his capital, personal guards, court etiquette (1.99), spies — with Achaemenid royal institutions and ceremonial have been held suspect of implying that

Herodotus fashioned details of Median kingship recorded in his account on the basis of Achaemenid royal practices known to him (e.g., Briant 1996: 36). The tale as a whole, however, is entirely compatible with the purposes of an account that conveyed connected claims of Cyrus and the Persians' rightful accession to the throne of Media, not to mention the former Mesopotamian Asiatic rule.

The designation of the type of monarchic power sought by Deioces as *tyrannis* and the description of the Mede as "having become infatuated with tyrannical rule" (1.96.2: ἐρασθεὶς τυραννίδος; cf. the similar representation of the Lacedaemonian Pausanias in 5.32) appear to be key references accounting for comparisons between Deioces' political aspirations and accomplishments and the Greek 'Tyrant's progress'. In the present context, they need imply nothing more than an apt conceptual comparison of the monarchic regime, which was reportedly established by this Median layman in the absence of a pre-existing (hereditary) Median institution of monarchic rule, with analogous regimes created by Greek upstarts. Herodotean license in enhancing the character of Deioces' kingship could also be appropriate to postulate only with reference to the role of Deioces' 'friends' — the single instance in which a reference bearing on Deioces is explicitly stated to represent a Herodotean opinion (1.97.2). From the Near Eastern perspective of the Medo-Persian *logos*, the emphasis on the splendid palace and capital city constructed at the orders of Deioces by the Medes as an appropriate setting for his royalty, Deioces' retinue of guards and spies, and the ceremonial attributed to the same monarch, are ever more likely to have been associated with a different, and patently Near Eastern, monarchic outlook. They would have served as allusions to a Mesopotamian endowment of kingship (note in particular the parallel between Deioces' explicit preference for a city-based kingship and the notion of kingship as a prerogative of cities in Mesopotamia, e.g., in the Sumerian Ling List [Jacobsen 1939, with the comments of Zournatzi forthcoming]) that was pre-eminently associated in the earlier part of the first millennium with the Assyrian imperial legacy (cf. Panaino 2003: 333-334) and was emulated by Assyria's heirs, including the Persians (hence, the similarities with Achaemenid institutions and protocol noted by earlier scholars). The merging of the figure of Cyrus with that of Sargon of Akkad in the tale of Astyages has just been proposed to express, in suitable Mesopotamian terms, the Persian conqueror's inherent personal 'right to rule' over the former Assyrian *archē*. Presented as features of a Median

institution of kingship that was created from scratch by Deioces — an institution that was for a time thought to signal the introduction of Greek improvisations — the worldly trappings of Deioces' monarchy would have adduced, in a similarly appropriate Mesopotamian fashion, complementary 'ritual' credentials in support of the claim of a new Iranian — ostensibly Median but, ultimately, Persian — order to the same Assyrian inheritance.

The remainder of the tale's references (1.96-98.1), accounting for the circumstances of Deioces' rise to power, articulated further crucial moral/religious grounds for the justification of Persia's Asiatic rule. As the story related by Herodotus goes, Deioces, a "wise man" (1.96.1: ἀνὴρ...σοφός) among the Medes and a man of mark in his village became infatuated with sovereignty. Bent on obtaining the sovereign power, and as lawlessness prevailed throughout the land, he "applied himself with greater zeal and earnestness than ever before to the practice of justice...in his conviction that justice and injustice are engaged in perpetual war with one another" (1.96.2: καὶ μᾶλλον τι καὶ προθυμότερον δικαιοσύνην ἐπιθέμενος ἥσκει· ... ἐπιστάμενος ὅτι τῷ δικαίῳ τὸ ἄδικον πολέμιόν ἐστι). He showed himself "a singularly upright judge" (1.96.3: ἀνὴρ μόνος κατὰ τὸ ὀρθὸν δικάζων), eventually attracting the attention of those, who lived in the surrounding villages and "had long been suffering from unjust judgments" (1.96.3: πρότερον περιπίπτοντες ἀδίκοισι γνώμησι). Once he gained the Medes' exclusive confidence, he announced that he no longer intended to hear causes as it did not square with his interests "to spend the whole day in regulating other men's affairs and to neglect his own". Thereupon robbery and lawlessness broke out afresh, and prevailed through the country even more than before. The Medes held a consultation on this state of affairs and resolved to set a king over themselves so that "their land [might] be well governed, and [they themselves might] be able to attend to their own affairs, and not be forced to quit [their] country on account of anarchy". In the debate that ensued in order to determine who should be appointed to the office, the merits of Deioces prevailed.

Subject to a singular emphasis throughout the account of Deioces (see also 1.100), the notion of a ruler's commitment to justice was a standard ingredient of the official utterances of Near Eastern monarchs, who also sought, time and again, to legitimize their authority by drawing a contrast between their just behavior and the acts of injustice perpetrated by their adversaries. The particular details in which this time-honored Near Eastern motif of royalty is rendered in the tale of Deioces evokes more closely

elements of the analogous political rhetoric of the Achaemenids and notions germane to the ancient Iranian worldview.

Defined in this context as independent, opposite forces that are in eternal conflict with each other, and as agents, respectively, of social orderliness and disorder, δίκαιον (“justice”) and ἄδικον (“injustice”) might be said to resonate a dichotomy engendered in the ancient Indo-Iranian metaphysical concepts of *aša/rta* and *drug*, also depicted as “independent, active” forces, and encompassing, the former notion, “cosmic and moral order (= “truth”)” and, the latter one, “all which is opposed to this harmony and regularity” (Schwartz 1985a: 641). This dichotomy appears to be expressed in the royal philosophy of Darius I by the opposition of “Lie” (Av. *draoγa-*, OP *drauga-*) and “Truth”, the latter being the principle with which Darius’ actions and inclinations, as a ruler, were consistently associated (see Schwartz 1985b: 685-686;³ for an interpretation of OP *rta* as “Law, Justice”, see Kent 1953: 170 s.v. *arta-*).

In Herodotus the appointment of Deioces as king was precipitated by circumstances of lawlessness (1.96.2-3, 1.97.2). The Medes decided to appoint a king to rule over them so that their land would be well-governed and they themselves would be free from sufferings brought by anarchy (1.97.3). In the Bisitun inscription, a similar state of affairs is suggested by the “commotion” that was widespread in the land (because of the ‘Lie’) (e.g., Kent 1953: DB I 32-35) before Darius was selected by Ahuramazda to “put [the land] down in its place” (Kent 1953: DNa 31-36) and the orderliness/justice brought by Darius’ royal authority (cf. Panaino 2003: 332).

Wisdom, featured in the Herodotean account as the determining trait of Deioces’ personal nature, and apparently of import with reference to the Mede’s ability to act as a most upright judge, is also ascribed a leading importance in the (self-)representation of the superior royal makeup of Darius. In this monarch’s funerary inscription at Naqsh-e Rostam, *xraθu* (“wisdom”) is introduced as the quintessential intellectual quality bestowed upon him (together with physical competence) by Ahuramazda (Kent 1953: DNb 3-4). It heads the list of (and is probably to be understood, as in the case of Deioces, as ruling) Darius’ other excellent (and equally divinely bestowed, Kent 1953: DNb 47-52) mental and moral qualities for

³ As Martin Schwartz informs me, he now prefers the translation of *aša/rta* as “rightness” and the translation of *drug* as “wrongness”.

exercising kingship: namely, his being by nature “a friend to right ...not a friend to wrong” and “not a friend to the man who is a Lie-follower”, having a “desire for what is right” (Kent 1953: DNb 5-13), as well as the capacity to control his weaknesses. As he states, he was not “hot tempered”, was able to hold under control “what things developed in [his] anger by [his] thinking power (*manah*)”, and to “rule firmly over [his] impulses” (Kent 1953: DNb 13-15).

The system of positive and negative mental and moral royal qualities that emerges from the beliefs and actions of Deioces and Darius re-materializes in the last tale of the Medo-Persian narrative, creating a stark contrast between the respective personalities (and qualifications for royalty) of Cyrus and Astyages. Cyrus, who came to be exposed as an infant due to Astyages’ fear that he might replace him (1.107-108), was ‘recognized’ as the grandson of the Median monarch at the age of ten. The miraculous recognition of his ‘real’ identity was prompted by his alignment with justice in a game of ‘king’ (1.114-116), wherein his punishment of the arrogance of a nobleman’s son (e.g., 1.115.2: ἐγὼ δὲ ταῦτα τοῦτον ἐποίησα σὺν δίκῃ, “I treated him thus in accordance with justice”) echoes directly the righteous manner in which Deioces (and Darius), as a king, decided analogous cases at law (1.100.2: εἴ τινα πυνθάνοιτο ὑβρίζοντα, τοῦτον ὅκως μεταπέμψαιτο, κατ’ ἀξίην ἐκάστου ἀδικήματος ἐδικαίει, “if he [i.e., Deioces] heard of any act of arrogance, he would send for the offender and punish him as the offense deserved”; cf. Kent 1953: DNb 17-18). As an adult, Cyrus would deliberate grave matters with wisdom (1.125.1: ὁ Κῦρος ἐφρόντιζε ὅτεω τρόπῳ σοφωτάτῳ Πέρσας ἀναπείσει ἀπίστασθαι, “Cyrus set himself to consider how he might most wisely persuade the Persians to revolt”).

Impulsiveness/proneness to anger (1.109.2: εἰ παραφρονήσει τε καὶ μανέεται κάκιον ἢ νῦν μαίνεται, “[Astyages] may become madder and more frantic still than he is now”; cf. 1.117.1, 118.1) and cruelty (1.123.2 [πικροῦ], 1.130.1 [πικρότητα], 1.108.3-4, 1.119.3-7, 1.128.2) — all of which may be understood from the representations of Deioces and Darius discussed above as qualities that were opposite to wisdom and righteousness, and, hence, as traits inappropriate for kingship — are consistently associated with the personality of Astyages. They are also variously indicated in the text of Herodotus to have been responsible for Astyages’ loss of his crown and the Persians’ enslavement of the Medes (e.g., 1.130.1: Ἀστυάγης ... τῆς βασιλείης κατεπαύσθη, Μῆδοι δὲ ὑπέκυσαν

Πέρσῃσι διὰ τὴν τούτου πικρότητα, “Astyages...lost his crown, and the Medes, in consequence of his cruelty, submitted to the Persians”).

The assembly of the autonomous Medes sanctioned the aspirations of the layman Deioces to rule over them because of his wisdom and demonstrated commitment to justice. The main thrust of the justification of Cyrus’ seizure of Astyages’ *archē* was based on Cyrus’ possession, like Deioces (and Darius), of wisdom and a strong sense of justice, qualities that countered Astyages’ impulsiveness and cruelty, establishing Cyrus’ superior mental and moral credentials and, hence, claim to rule.

The three-kingdom sequence as a Persian scheme

Subject to the foregoing analysis, the (eastern) historical sequences and associated dynastic tales of Herodotus’ Lydian and Median narratives would be germane, respectively, to etiologies of Cyrus’ takeover of the Lydian and Median thrones — or, as our text would have us believe, of the two age-old lines of kingship of Lower and Upper Asia. Herodotus was not an apologist for Persian imperial rule. The justificatory tenor and Persian bias of both of these narratives are best attributed to his sources and can be presumed to reflect the impact of the political rhetoric of Persia on then extant accounts about her subjects’ historical past. In this regard, the representation of Cyrus’ right to rule over the Lydians and the Medes in terms of different motifs, and apparently distinct worldviews, may be further seen to be consonant with the varied responses of the Persian rulers to the imperative for the legitimation of their authority in different political and cultural spheres of their imperial realm.

Depicted as a half-Median/half-Persian king in Herodotus, Cyrus represented himself as a stereotypical Mesopotamian monarch in Babylon (Kuhrt 2007) and as an Anshanite ruler in the wider Elamite-Mesopotamian environment (Zournatzi forthcoming). The combination of Achaemenid and Egyptian motifs of sovereignty in the inscriptions and iconography of the Egyptian-made statue of Darius discovered at Susa speaks for analogous Persian allowances for traditional perceptions of legitimate rule in Egypt (Zournatzi forthcoming). The Lydian *logos*, which seeks to justify Cyrus’ accession to the Lydian throne on grounds (oracles, *hybris*, Fate) that were, as far as we can tell, acceptable in a Greco-Lydian environment, may echo yet another Persian scheme of legitimation, shaped, in this instance, in dialogue with western traditional perceptions of legitimate rule

and addressed to the empire's western Anatolian subjects. Although it nominally focuses on Median and Persian affairs, the Medo-Persian *logos* was actually meant to promote Cyrus' rightful accession to a rule of (Upper) Asia traced to the Assyrians and appeals to concepts and formulations of legitimate kingship that were variously apposite to an Iranian and a Mesopotamian worldview. It could represent an iranocentric address of Persia's right to rule over the wider Near Eastern world that was placed under Assyrian and Median and, then, Persian sway. The suggested Iranian bias of this *logos* may also be seen to be encoded in the three-kingdom scheme.

Following the collapse of Assyrian power, extensive central and western stretches of the Assyrian empire came under the control of the Babylonians, who were also principally responsible, together with the Medes, for the demise of the last major Assyrian stronghold, Nineveh. The existence of this Babylonian kingdom, which is known to have been in its prime at the same time as the maximal rule of the Medes and to have survived through the first decade of the reign of Cyrus, and which should be properly mentioned together with the Medes as an immediate predecessor to Persia's rule of (Upper) Asia, is nowhere clearly enunciated in the Median *logos*.

Earlier scholarship has variously sought to explain this omission as being incidental to the narrow focus of the Median *logos* on activities of Median rulers, to Herodotus' imperfect knowledge of seventh- and sixth-century Near Eastern affairs when he initially composed his account about the Medes, and/or to the Greek historian's intention to present pertinent information about the political history of Babylon (and Assyria) in a separate *logos* (or even a separate work) that is now lost or perhaps never materialized (see, among others, Zawadzki 1984, with a critical review of earlier opinions; see also Madreiter 2011, with reference to the similar obliteration of the Babylonian Kingdom in Ctesias). Be that as it may, the text of Herodotus supplies a number of indications that the effective obliteration of the Babylonian kingdom from among Persia's imperial predecessors in the account of Cyrus' rise to the rule of (Upper) Asia must have been, to begin with, a matter of a deliberate suppression.

As we have seen (above, pp. 231-232), far from constituting a mere collection of testimonies about the history of the Median kingdom, the Median dynastic sequence is directly referred to the theme of sovereignty that is elaborated in *Histories* 1.6-1.130, and is portrayed in particular as *the* link

in the transmission of the *archē* of (Upper) Asia from the Assyrians to the Persians. The wording of the account transmitted by Herodotus also consistently equates the near totality of the region of Asia once controlled by the Assyrians with the domain that fell under Median sway. At 1.102.2, describing the beginnings of Median expansion under Deioces' son and successor, Phraortes, Herodotus indicates that, having first subdued the Persians, Phraortes "proceeded to conquer Asia overrunning province after province (until) at last he engaged in war with the Assyrians ... who were formerly rulers of all (ἦρχον ... πάντων), [and who] stood alone at present by the revolt and desertion of their allies". With the exception of the Persians, the nations that were reportedly conquered by Phraortes are not named and cannot be placed on the map. The reference, however, to provinces overrun one after the other, leading ultimately to an attack upon Assyria, gives an impression of a Median domain that encompassed (possibly among additional districts in the east never touched by Assyrian power) the sum of the nations once controlled, and by then lost, as we are told, by the Assyrians, who "were formerly rulers of all". And when Nineveh was taken, during the reign of Phraortes' successor, Cyaxares, our text implies an exclusively Median responsibility (and glory) for this dramatic turning point in the political history of Upper Asia: the Medes "took Nineveh ... and conquered all Assyria except the district (μοίρης) of Babylonia" (1.106.2: τήν τε Νίνον εἶλον ... καὶ τοὺς Ἀσσυρίους ὑποχειρίους ἐποιήσαντο πλὴν τῆς Βαβυλωνίης μοίρης). The reference to Babylonia in the latter context —the only such reference throughout the Median account— passes up in silence the role of the Babylonians in the sack of Nineveh and depicts the Neo-Babylonian kingdom as a mere district of Assyria. If anything, it makes one think of a co-option of this kingdom into the Assyrian realm whose former territories are otherwise repeatedly stated or implied in the text to have been taken over by the Medes.

Throughout the account, moreover, the transition from the Assyrian to the Persian rule of (Upper) Asia is portrayed exclusively in terms of Iranian political visibility: a succession of Median rulers, whose regime — spanning, perhaps, as many as 156 years (e.g. Scurlock 1990) from the time of the alleged founder of the Median state, Deioces, down to the time of the last Median king, Astyages, displaced by Cyrus — was interrupted only by a brief (1.106.1: twenty-eight-year) interlude of a Scythian (hence, also Iranian!) regency of Upper Asia (1.130.1: Μῆδοι δὲ ὑπέκυσαν Πέρσησι

..., ἄρξαντες τῆς ἄνω Ἑλλυος ποταμοῦ Ἀσίης ἐπ' ἔτεα τριήκοντα καὶ ἑκατὸν δυὼν δέοντα, παρέξ ἢ ὅσον οἱ Σκύθαι ἦρχον, "the Medes ruled over the [parts of] Asia above [i.e., to the east of] the Halys for 128 years, excepting [or including] the time when the Scythians had the dominion"). Whether or not this representation of a Median and Scythian 'exclusivity' in the rule of Upper Asia following the deterioration of Assyrian power and before the rise of Persia preserves echoes of an actual process of Scythian expansion that led to the formation of a Scytho-Median elite in charge of an imperial Median state (Vogelsang 1998), its iranocentric standpoint is inescapable. Seen in this light, the elimination of the Neo-Babylonian kingdom from the history of Asiatic rule related in the Median *logos* is far more likely than not to have been consistent with a historical perspective that consciously sought to promote an Iranian political order against a Mesopotamian one. Such a manipulation of the past was well within the capabilities of eastern imperialist history making.

As indicated in the beginning of this presentation, in Book 1.178-200 (thus, *outside* the narrative section, 1.6-1.130, that treats the theme proper of the Persians' accession to the rule of Lower and Upper Asia) Herodotus offers a lengthy account about Babylon and its conquest by Cyrus. Even though it makes no reference to Babylon's extensive territorial control, his Babylonian narrative directly acknowledges both Babylon's long history of rule (e.g., 1.184) and the continuing existence of a Babylonian kingdom through the era of Median power (1.185.1 and 1.185.7; cf. 1.74.3-4 and 1.77.2) and into the early period of Cyrus' reign. It also appears to preserve traces of a tradition that posited a direct Babylonian inheritance of Assyrian kingship, ignoring the analogous, competing claim that the Median *logos* puts forward with reference to the Medes. The most striking instance is a reference in the opening of the Babylonian *logos* (1.178.1, cf. Högemann 1992: 57 n. 80) to the transfer of the seat of rule (or "kingship") in 'Assyria' from Nineveh to Babylon following the fall of Nineveh, which may be understood as a close Greek translation of the standard formula used in the Sumerian King List for the transmission of (legitimate) kingship in Mesopotamia from city to city (Zournatzi forthcoming). A further reference, this time to the last Babylonian monarch, Labynetus (i.e., Nabonidus), attacked by Cyrus, as one who "held the *archē* of the Assyrians" (1.188.1: ἔχοντα ... τὴν Ἀσσυρίων ἀρχήν), might also be taken to imply the perpetuation of Assyrian sovereignty as a prerogative of Babylonian rulers down to the time of Cyrus.

From the information about Babylon at his disposal, Herodotus would have probably been able to correct the skewed perspective on the history of Asiatic rule presented in the Medo-Persian narrative. His single reference to the exclusion of Babylonia from the Median domain (1.106.2), which is incongruous with the tenor of an all-encompassing Median rule that pervades the Median *logos*, might represent just such an attempt (the reference has also been attributed to a Herodotean realization that “eliminating ... information about Assyria (*sic!*) distorted the history of Mesopotamia and the whole Ancient East” by Zawadzki 1984: 266). The overall impression one forms, however, from Herodotus’ text is that he did not, at least not drastically, intervene in the essentials of an Iranian storyline. Treating the history of Babylon and its conquest by Cyrus in a different narrative section, thus, as being distinct, from the story of Cyrus’ rise to the rule of (Upper) Asia related in the Medo-Persian *logos*, Herodotus may be seen to have preserved two different Asiatic traditions (evidently derived from different sources) about the succession to Assyrian rule: a Babylonian/Mesopotamian tradition that posited a Babylonian inheritance of Assyrian kingship, and an Iranian one that only admitted a transmission of the same Assyrian rule through the Medes (and Scythians) (for other considerations suggesting the Babylonian affinities, and anti-Persian spirit, of the tradition reflected in the Babylonian *logos*, see, e.g., Kratz 2002: esp. 151-153). Though in conflict with each other, these two traditions were based on the same principle. They perpetuate a perception of a single-line transmission of kinship that did not acknowledge the existence of parallel rules. This notion is attested in the Near East as early as the time of the composition of the Sumerian King List. Judging by Herodotus 1.178.1 (above), it was still alive in Mesopotamia in the Persian period.

In the political environment of Mesopotamia, to which the Sumerian King List refers, the idea of legitimate territorial rule was traditionally expressed in terms of a single heavenly kingship that was transferred in a direct line from one Mesopotamian city to another. Following the phenomenal expansion of the Assyrians in the Near East in the early centuries of the first millennium, their successors’ claims to extended control over Asia would be inevitably traced to the Assyrian legacy, to the exclusion, again, of any form of competing dominion.

Concluding remarks

This discussion of the Median and other eastern materials of the first book of the *Histories* cannot claim to expose the full range of problems that pertain to Herodotus' interpretation of the history of Asia or the amount of discussion that they have generated. It has been primarily meant to draw attention to the potential of these materials to yield new insights into the dialogue between Greek and Near Eastern historical perspectives at an early moment of Greek historical writing.

For over a century, the extensive preoccupation of Herodotus with the history of the East prior to the emergence of the Persian power has been perceived as being more or less extraneous to the events of Persian history he treats in his work and as emanating from his own historical-ethnographical-geographical interests. The foregoing interpretation of the Lydian and Median historical narratives as etiologies of Persian rule suggests that, at least in these two instances,⁴ this preoccupation was integral to his Persian theme. It must have been predetermined, moreover, by his source material: extant accounts that were ultimately shaped by an eastern approach to history as a sequence of kingdoms ruled by kings and a perennial eastern concern with legitimate kingship which could freely claim priority over historical accuracy.

Featured in Herodotus as a survey of Median history, but loosely concerned with historical facts, the Median *logos* bears testimony first and foremost, like its Lydian counterpart, to the imperative for the justification of Persian imperial authority and the impact of the imperial rhetoric of Persia on the historical traditions of her subjects and Greek neighbors. The latter impact is illustrated, among others, by the iranocentric, 'Herodotean' interpretation of the history of (Upper) Asia as a sequence of an Assyrian, a Median, and a Persian kingdom — a Persian adaptation of a millennial Near Eastern historical perspective that would continue to be echoed in the west through subsequent reformulations of the theory of the succession of world empires.

⁴ Accounting for a further important line of kingship and Cambyses' accession to it, the history of Egypt in 2.99.2-3.16 may also be said to adhere to a similar scheme. On the whole, the special focus of the Herodotean account about the history of the pre-Achaemenid East on Lydia, Media, Babylon, and Egypt may be seen to correspond with the major lines of kingship that were extant at the time of the emergence of the Persian power and were taken over by the Persians.

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**RELIGIÖSE IKONOGRAPHIE
AUF PARTHISCHEN MÜNZEN:
DER EINFLUSS POLITISCH-GESELLSCHAFTLICHER
VERÄNDERUNGEN AUF DAS BILD DER GÖTTIN TYCHE
IM PARTHISCHEN REICH**

DURCH

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Abstract: Coins are the most important primary source for the study of Parthian religious beliefs. The religious development as illustrated by contemporary coins runs parallel with political and cultural changes which also leave their iconographic imprint.

In the first phase (247-171 BC), the rise of the Empire, coins make no religious reference. The absence of pictorial representations of gods seems to be an indication that there was as yet no relevant religious or artistic tradition.

In the second phase (171–51 BC), goddesses on interregal type coins (Bagasi) from ca. 127 BC to Mithradates II (118 BC at the latest) represent Tyche. The “Hellenistic Tyche”, as I call her, is a goddess with no Parthian traits and therefore not be interpreted in a syncretic way. Her Hellenistic traits, which correspond with the overall Greek orientation of the Parthian kings, survive the death of Mithradates I for approximately 20 years. After the Hellenistic Tyche’s last appearance on the tetradrachms of Mithradates II, the coined image of the goddess disappears for fifty years.

The third Phase (70 BC-51 AD), beginning with Phraates III, surprises with a completely new image of Tyche in relation to the king. Now standing behind him, the goddess symbolically transfers divine glory and fortune (*khvarrah*) to the king and is thus a clear reference to Zoroastrianism. Tyche’s new status and function have definitely made her a “Parthian Tyche”. In this phase, the goddess’ syncretic character is readable for Greeks and Parthians alike. The religious changes have once again strong temporal, if not immediately causal links with the time’s socio-political history characterised by the consolidation of the Parthian empire and the achieved status of self-sufficient nationhood.

The last phase of the empire’s history (51–247 AD) saw a yet more distinct turning-away from Hellenism. Tyche has become a purely Parthian goddess with an unmistakable Iranian-Zoroastrian background. It is most likely that this Parthian Tyche was looked upon as a personification of Anahita or Ashi. In the light of what is known about the Commagene, it can be assumed that the function of the Parthians’ goddess was not restricted to the transference of divine glory and

fortune (*khvarrah*) to the king alone, but was meant to guarantee the well-being of the Parthian empire as a whole.

Keywords: Tyche, Parthia, *khvarrah*, Parthian Religion, Goddesses — Greek and Parthian, Synkretism, Ashi, Anahita, Zoroastrianism, Parthian Coins — Iconography, Parthian History, Parthian Culture.

Einleitung

Münzen stellen die wichtigste Primär-Quelle für die Erforschung des Parthischen Reiches dar. Die Bildfülle der parthischen Münzen erscheint nur auf den ersten Blick uniform, bei genauerer Betrachtung können auch heute noch viele Details gefunden und bewertet werden.¹ Über die Religion und religiöse Bräuche in Parthien fehlen sichere Informationen,² da zeitgenössische Quellen oder Hinweise kaum vorhanden sind. Ansatzpunkt dieser Arbeit ist es, die Ikonographie der Münzen, die wie keine andere primäre Quelle den gesamten Verlauf der parthischen Geschichte abbildet, unter dem Aspekt der Glaubensbezüge zu verfolgen und in Bezug zu den geschichtlichen und kulturellen Veränderungen zu setzen. Besonderes Augenmerk wird hierbei auf die vielfältigen Darstellungen von Gottheiten wie Zeus, Apollo, Herakles oder Tyche und dem Auftreten von religiösen Begriffen wie $\Theta\epsilon\omicron\Upsilon$ (Gott) und $\Theta\epsilon\omicron\pi\alpha\tau\omicron\pi\omicron\varsigma$ (dessen Vater ein Gott ist) gelegt. Auch sind Tierfiguren wie der Adler, der die Könige krönt, als Symbol göttlicher Macht zu berücksichtigen. Astrale Zeichen wie Sonne, Mond und Sterne lassen ebenfalls göttliche Bezüge postulieren.

Ziel dieser Arbeit ist es zu zeigen, dass Veränderungen von Glaubensinhalten ikonographisch feststellbar sind und diese Veränderungen in einen Kontext zu den geschichtlichen bzw. kulturellen Daten gestellt werden können. Hilfreich ist hierbei die Einteilung der Geschichte des Parthischen Reiches in vier Phasen, die Entstehung des Reiches, seiner Expansion, der Rolle als führende Großmacht und schließlich den Untergang umfassen. Das Parthische Reich darf dabei nicht isoliert vom dem Seleukidenreich,

¹ Ein neueres Beispiel hierfür ist die Arbeit von Winkelmann 2006, die die Darstellungen von Waffen auf den parthischen Münzen analysiert hat und durch den Vergleich mit den Waffen der Steppennomaden nachweisen konnte, dass über Jahrhunderte hinweg ein Waffentransfer von Zentralasien über Parthien nach Westen bis in die Kommagene hinein stattfand.

² Colledge 1986: 4.

dem Graeko-Baktrischen Reich und den parthischen Vasallenstaaten im Westen und Osten betrachtet werden, da gerade in den Randzonen die stärksten synkretistischen Veränderungen zu beobachten sind.

Es ist immer wieder betont worden, dass mit der Darstellung hellenistischer ausschender Götter auf Münzen parthische Gottheiten gemeint sind, die synkretistische Züge erhalten haben.³ Ergänzendes Ziel der Ausführungen ist es daher, anhand dieser ikonographischen Untersuchung und weiteren Belegen zur Erhärtung dieser Aussage beizutragen. Dabei wird der Versuch unternommen, auch eine zeitliche Eingrenzung von solchen Akkulturationsprozessen durchzuführen. Besonderes Augenmerk wird auf die Abbildung der Göttin Tyche gelegt und die Frage diskutiert, inwieweit die Göttin im Verlauf parthischer Geschichte unterschiedliche Wesenszüge aufweist und ob synkretistische Veränderungen zu beobachten sind.

Des weiteres soll diskutiert werden, ob die dargestellte Göttin auf den Tetradrachmen des Königs der Interregnal Issue (127-125 v.Ch.), von Artabanos I. (127-124 v.Ch.) und Mithradates II. (123-88 v.Ch.) Tyche ist und nicht, wie bisher von Sellwood angegeben, Demeter.⁴

In einer Gesamtübersicht sollen schließlich zu den ikonographischen Analysen der Münzen die übrigen Primärquellen mit Informationen über die parthische Religion hinzugezogen werden, um weitere Anhaltspunkte dafür zu finden, dass mit der dargestellten Göttin eine parthische Gottheit gemeint ist.

I. Phase — von Arsaces I. bis Phraates I. (247-171 v.Ch.)

I. a) Religiöse Bezüge auf den Münzen

Gottheiten werden auf den Silberdrachmen von Arsaces I. und Arsaces II. nicht dargestellt. Auch die Inschriften weisen keinen religiösen Bezug auf. Adler können ein Symbol für einen göttlichen Bezug darstellen. Auf zwei Münzen⁵ aus dieser I. Phase ist zwar ein Adler dargestellt — einmal

³ Curtis 2007: 7 ff.

⁴ Sellwood gibt für den S18.1 (Interregnal Issue) Typ Demeter als Göttin an, für die Tetradrachmen von Artabanus I. (S21.1-21.4) und Mithradates II. (S23.1-23.2) benennt er die dargestellte Figur „goddess“.

⁵ Auf einer Drachme von Arsaces II. [S6.1 rev/S5.1 obv (mule)] wird ein Adler zu Füßen des sitzenden Königs dargestellt, bei einer S6.2 Variante, einem Dichalkous, wird ein Adler abgebildet, der auf einem Bullenkopf steht, rechts daneben ist ein Pferdekopf.

steht der Adler dabei über einem Bullenkopf — ein göttlicher Bezug ist hieraus nicht abzuleiten.⁶ Das Bild des Adlers über einem Bullen ist schon bei Siegeln aus Uruk aus der Regierungszeit von Seleukos I. (358-281 v.Ch.) bekannt und kann als iranisches Motiv des mittleren bis späten 2. Jahrtausend v.Ch. gedeutet werden, womit ein Sieg über den Gegner propagiert wird.⁷

I. b) *Geschichtlich-kulturelle Entwicklung des Partherreiches in der I. Phase*

In der ersten Phase unter Arsaces I. (247–211 v.Ch.) und seinen Nachfolgern ging es um die Stabilisierung des neu entstandenen Partherreiches, das am Anfang noch um die Anerkennung kämpfen musste und auch mit weiteren Eroberungen immer noch in einer Instabilitätsphase war. Einerseits stammten die Parther aus der Steppe und hatten ihre Wurzeln dort, andererseits hatten sie nun Gebiete erobert, in denen vorher die Seleukiden und zuvor die Achämeniden lebten, und herrschten nun über einen hohen Anteil griechischer Bevölkerung.⁸

Das Bildprogramm der Münzen Arsaces I. zeigt den König auf der Vorderseite im typisch seleukidischen Stil: das Gesicht ist nur beim Typ Sellwood S1 nach rechts gewandt, auf allen späteren Münzen ist das Gesicht nach links gewandt (Sellwood S2,3,4.). Arsaces I. wird in dieser ersten Phase mit der nomadischen Kopfbedeckung abgebildet, einem weichen Hut aus Leder.⁹ Der König trägt einen medischen Mantel mit langen leeren Ärmeln, der Kandys (s. Abb. 1) und sitzt auf einem Stuhl ohne Lehne, in der rechten Hand hält er einen hellenistischen symmetrischen Reflexbogen.¹⁰ Arsaces II. wird in gleicher Art dargestellt.

Es lassen sich verschiedene politische Botschaften in dieser ersten Phase des Parthischen Reiches aus den Münzbildern herauslesen. Arsaces I., der erste parthische König, der aus einem nomadischen Kulturkreis kommt und nun in einem Bereich mit griechischer Grundstruktur herrscht, nimmt

⁶ Vgl. die Investiturszenen parthischer Könige durch einen Adler, z.B. auf Münzen von Phraates IV. (s. Bild 14).

⁷ Mark Passchl, Diskussionsforum parthia.com, persönliche Mitteilung.

⁸ Winkelmann 2006: 134.

⁹ In verschiedenen Arbeiten wird von der „Bashlyk“ gesprochen, dies ist jedoch ein später entstandener türkischer Ausdruck (persönl. Mitteilung V.S. Curtis).

¹⁰ Winkelmann 2006: 140.



Abb. 1. Arsaces I, S3.1. Vorderseite: bartloser Kopf nach links, der Kopf ist von einem „soft hat“ bedeckt, Rückseite: Bartloser Bogenschütze mit „soft hat“ und einem medischen Mantel mit leeren Ärmeln, hinter dem Rücken die griechische Inschrift = ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ, vor den Beinen eine aramäische Inschrift.

Bezug zur eigenen Herkunft und den mit ihm verbündeten Steppenvölkern. Dies wird deutlich, in dem er sich auf den Vorderseiten der Münzen mit einer typisch nomadisch skythischen Kopfbedeckung, dem „soft hat“, darstellen lässt. Mit diesem Bezug versichert er sich auch seiner Gefolgsleute.

Auch Arsaces II. lässt sich dieser Weise porträtieren. Gleichzeitig zeigt er auf, warum und wie die Parther das Land erobern konnten: mit dem Einsatz von Pfeil und Bogen. Der Bogen in der Hand des Königs signalisiert seine Macht. Mit der Beibehaltung und Fortführung des seleukidischen Münzbildes wird an die großen Leistungen der vorangehenden Herrscher angeknüpft und ein Bezug zu dem seleukidischen und achämenidischen Reich hergestellt. Der König lässt sich mit einem hellenistischen Zeremonialbogen abbilden, der allerdings keinen Bezug zu den von den Parthern tatsächlich benutzten Waffen hat.¹¹ Dieser Bogen galt im achämenidischen Reich als typisches Herrschaftszeichen. Auch der medische Mantel auf der Rückseite der Münzen von Arsaces I. stellt diesen Bezug zu den Achämeniden her,¹² all dies sind Hinweise, dass die Parther auch an diese Traditionen anknüpfen wollen.

Die vielleicht wichtigste politische Botschaft geht an die griechischstämmige Bevölkerung, die Arsaces I. besiegt hat. Die ersten Münzen von ihm enthalten in griechischer Schrift den Hinweis auf den König

¹¹ Winkelmann 2006: 140.

¹² Winkelmann 2006: 140.

(ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ = Arsaces), der sich den Titel „ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΟΡΟΣ“ (= Autokrat) gibt. Daneben enthalten die Münzen von Arsaces I. auch aramäische Schriftzeichen (Typ Sellwood S3 und 4, s. Abb.1), sicherlich eine Botschaft an die besetzten aramäisch sprechende Gebiete, auch wenn es bislang nicht gelungen ist, die Zeichen zu übersetzen.

I. c) Zusammenfassende Beurteilung der I. Phase in religiöser, geschichtlicher und kultureller Gesamtsicht

Die erste Phase von Arsaces I. bis Phraates I. (247-171 v.Ch.) umfasst den Aufstieg des von Nomaden im Nordostiran gegründeten Königums in ein größeres Reichsgebiet, das hellenistisch beeinflusst war. In dieser Zeit ist in den Münzbildern deutlich der Bezug zum Nomadentum erkennbar, aber die parthischen Könige verstanden sehr wohl, dass sie sich der griechischen Unterstützung versichern mussten. Sie wandelten die nomadische Stammesstruktur in eine Monarchie um und orientierten sich dabei an den griechischen Strukturen.

Da die Münzen von Arsaces I. und Arsaces II. keine Gottheiten oder religiöse Inschriften zeigen, kann man folgern, dass es für Darstellungen von Göttern oder Glaubensinhalten keine religiöse oder künstlerische Tradition gab. Ebenso kann man schlussfolgern, dass die Parther weiter ihrer eigenen Religion anhängen.

II. Phase — von Mithradates I. bis Darius (171 bis 70 v.Ch.)

II. a) Münzen mit religiösen Bezügen

Ganz neu im Bildprogramm der II. Phase sind religiöse Bezüge auf den Münzen. Dies ist ein entscheidender Einschnitt, da Gottheiten bei den zuvor herrschenden Arsakiden auf Münzen weder dargestellt noch benannt werden.

Erstmalig und nur bei einer Drachme des Königs Mithradates I. vom Typ S10.15¹³ wird der Begriff ΘΕΟΥ verwandt,¹⁴ alle anderen Münzen

¹³ In diesem Artikel wird an der Genealogie von Sellwood festgehalten. Sellwood 1980: 24; Assar 2008: 1-7, der eine neue Zuordnung der Münzen vorschlägt, ordnet die Münzen S7.1, S7.2 (Darstellung von Göttinnen) und S10.15 (Inschrift ΘΕΟΥ) Phriapatius zu.

¹⁴ Assar (s.o.) schreibt diese Münze dessen Vater Phriapatius zu. Assar vermutet, dass Phriapatius diesen Titel vermutlich aufgrund seiner Erfolge gegen Antiochus III. erhalten

dieses Herrschers verwenden ihn nicht. Man mag daraus folgern, dass Mithradates I. nicht viel daran gelegen war, diesen Begriff zu verwenden.¹⁵ Die Inschrift ΘΕΟΥ wird nur bei zwei weiteren Königen benutzt, einer davon, Phraates III., prägt diesen Begriff nur bei einer Münztype (S39.1). Der andere König, Mithradates III. (57-54 v.Ch.)¹⁶ lässt sich hingegen auf allen Münzen als Gott bezeichnen,¹⁷ während sein Bruder Orodes II. diese Bezeichnung nicht verwendet. Wir wissen, dass die beiden Brüder ihren Vater, Phraates III. umbringen ließen und danach um die Vorherrschaft im Reich kämpften. Wollte sich Mithradates III. politische Vorteile verschaffen, indem er sich als Gott bezeichnen ließ?

Welche politische oder religiöse Bedeutung hat der Begriff Gott? Vor Beantwortung dieser Frage ist es sinnvoll, sich zunächst den Bezeichnungen ΘΕΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ und ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ zuzuwenden. Der Begriff ΘΕΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ (dessen Vater ein Gott ist) kommt erstmalig bei Mithradates I. (S10.17) vor.¹⁸ Bei der Analyse aller Münzen mit dem Begriff ΘΕΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ¹⁹ fällt auf, dass nicht alle nachfolgenden Könige solche Bezeichnungen auf ihren Münzen verwenden. Warum, so ist zu fragen, verwenden einige Herrscher diese Begriffe überhaupt nicht, andere nur bei wenigen Münztypen²⁰ (s. Tab. 3 und 4). Hatten die Könige also unterschiedliche Glaubensauffassungen? Waren ihnen Bekenntnisse zu Glaubensbezügen nicht von vorrangiger Bedeutung? Sind politische Absichten zu vermuten? Diese Fragen können aus den Analysen heraus ebenso wenig beantwortet werden wie die Frage, wie der Begriff Gott gemeint ist. Ist der König ein Gott, gleichgestellt mit anderen Göttern, oder ist er nur gottähnlich? Auch der Begriff „dessen Vater ein Gott ist“ bleibt unscharf. Ist Phraates II. als Sohn des Mithradates I. auch ein Gott oder ist er ein Mensch? Welchen Bezug hat Phraates II., dessen Vater ein Gott

hat. Eine weitere mögliche Erklärung ist für Assar, dass zwei zeitgleich lebende baktrische Könige den Titel ΘΕΟΥ bereits benutzen und Phriapatius sich ebenso zu diesem Titel entschloss.

¹⁵ In einer so frühen Phase war es für den parthischen König, der gerade Mesopotamien erobert hatte und sich mit der griechischen Bevölkerung arrangieren musste, vermutlich nicht sinnvoll, den für die Griechen anders fassbaren Begriff „Gott“ zu verwenden.

¹⁶ Mithradates III. ist der letzte König, bei dem der Begriff „ΘΕΟΥ“ verwendet wird.

¹⁷ Münzen S40 und S41.

¹⁸ Curtis 2007: 9.

¹⁹ Einige Münzen verwenden auch den Begriff ΘΕΟΠΑΤΡΟΥ.

²⁰ s. Tabellen der Genealogie von Sellwood bzw. Assar.



Abb. 2. Mithradates I., Silberdrachme, S10.17, Prägeort: Hekatompylos. Vorderseite: bartlose Büste nach links, „soft hat“ mit Diadem, der Herrscher trägt einen Ohrring. Rückseite: ein bartloser Bogenschütze sitzt auf einem Omphalos, er trägt eine Kandys, in der rechten Hand hält er einen asymmetrischen Reflexbogen, Inschrift: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ ΘΕΟΠΑΤΟΡ (vom großen König Arsakes, dessen Vater ein Gott ist).

ist,²¹ zu den griechischen Göttern Apollo²² und Hermes,²³ die auf seinen Münzausgaben dargestellt werden?

Auffällig ist zumindest, dass die Münzen mit den Darstellungen von Apollo, Hermes und auch Nike in Susa bzw. Seleukia am Tigris geprägt wurden, und damit eher einen griechisch beeinflussten Bereich erreichen konnten, während Münzen mit dem Begriff ΘΕΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ überwiegend aus den Münzstätten des parthischen Kernlandes und des Osten stammen, und damit vermutlich eine parthische Bevölkerungsschicht als Zielgruppe anzunehmen ist.²⁴

In dieser II. Phase erschließt sich anhand der Münzenanalyse der Begriff ΘΕΟΥ oder ΘΕΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ noch nicht. Im Vorgriff zu den weiteren Ausführungen (s. die Informationen bei Phraates III.) kann hier schon ausgeführt werden, dass die Könige sich selbst nicht als Götter gesehen

²¹ Der Begriff taucht auf einer Reihe unterschiedlichen Subtypen von S16, auf, z. B. S16.20, S16.21 u. S16.22.

²² Münze S14.1.

²³ Münze S14.5.

²⁴ Ecbatana, Rhagae, Nisa, Tambrax, Apamea, Rhagiane? und Epardus.

haben dürften, sondern mit den Gottesbegriffen gemeint ist, dass der König seine Stellung durch eine Gottesnähe verdankt.

Eine deutliche Änderung der religiösen Bildprogramme findet sich bei den Münzen von Mithradates I., die in Seleukia am Tigris geprägt wurden (S13.1 bis 13.10). Der Herrscher trägt keine nomadische Kleidung mehr, sondern präsentiert sich ganz im hellenistischen Stil. Auf der Rückseite der Tetradrachmen wird Herakles mit einem Löwenfell und Keule dargestellt (s. Abb. 7), während auf seinen Drachmen Zeus abgebildet wird, der nach links sitzt und in seiner rechten Hand einen Adler hält. Wichtig ist zu vermerken, dass auf Münzen, die in Seleukia geprägt wurden, der Begriff ΘΕΟΥ oder ΘΕΟΠΙΑΤΟΡ fehlt.²⁵

II. b) *Tyche — griechische Göttin im Wandel: Religiöse Bezüge auf den Münzen von Phraates II., der Interregal Issue, von Artabanus I. und von Mithradates II. (138–88 v.Ch.) sowie von Demetrios I. und II.*

Die wohl wichtigsten Veränderungen und die Darstellung von Gottheiten in dieser II. Phase finden wir bei den Münzen von Phraates II. (138–127 v.Ch.), der Interregal Issue (127–125 v.Ch.)²⁶, von Artabanus I. (127–124 v.Ch.) und von Mithradates II. (123–88 v.Ch.). In diesem Zusammenhang müssen wegen sehr ähnlichen Bildaufbaus auch die abgebildeten Göttinnen der seleukidischen Herrscher Demetrios I. (162–150 v.Ch.) und Demetrios II. (145–139/138 v.Ch.) in die Betrachtung mit einbezogen werden (s. Abb. 3 bis 6).

Auf allen genannten Münzen ist gemeinsam, dass die Göttin im linken Arm eine Cornucopia hält. Sie sitzen alle nach links gewandt, das rechte Bein ist im Knie nach hinten gebeugt und das linke Bein etwas nach vorne gestreckt. Auch die Kleidung ist gleich, ein Chiton mit einem Mantel (Himation), der um die Hüften geschwungen ist. Gleich — bis auf die Münze von Phraates II. — ist auch der hintere Fuß des Thronsessels, der in Form eines Seewesens, oben als geflügeltes weibliches Wesen (Nike?), unten als Triton gestaltet ist. Wichtigster Unterschied zu den Münzen von Demetrios I. und II. ist, dass dort die Göttin ein kurzes Zepter in der rechten

²⁵ Dąbrowa 2008: 29.

²⁶ Assar 2006b: 108 identifiziert den Herrscher als Bagasis; er dürfte kurze Zeit vor Artabanus I. geherrscht haben.

Hand hält, während auf den parthischen Münzprägungen die Gottheiten eine Nike auf der Hand tragen, die einen Kranz überreicht.

Die bisher beschriebenen Unterschiede, aber auch Gleichheiten werden in den Analysen verschiedener namhafter Autoren wie Sellwood, Le Rider²⁷ nicht infrage gestellt. Unterschiedliche Meinungen gibt es jedoch bei der Zuordnung, ob mit der Göttin Demeter oder Tyche gemeint ist, oder nur von einer Göttin gesprochen wird. Sellwood spricht bei Tetradrachmen der Interregal Issue von der Göttin Demeter, (S18.1), bei Artabanus I. und Mithradates II. lediglich von einer Göttin, ohne eine nähere Zuordnung zu machen.²⁸ Le Rider identifiziert Göttinnen als Tyche nur, wenn sie eine „Mauerkrone“²⁹ tragen, während Göttinnen, die ohne Mauerkrone, jedoch mit einer Cornucopia abgebildet werden, nicht näher bestimmt als orientalische Göttinnen benannt werden. Assar benennt die Göttin auf den Münzen von der Interregal Issue (=Bagasis) Tyche? Nikephoros, allerdings mit einem Fragezeichen hinter Tyche versehen.³⁰ Eine einheitliche Lesart, um welche Göttin es sich handelt, liegt somit bislang nicht vor.

Die Münzen des Seleukiden Demetrios I. sind in der Betrachtung, welche Göttin bei den parthischen Münzen dieser Zeitperiode gemeint sind, insofern wichtig, als sie zum ersten Mal Tyche³¹ in sitzender Position zeigen, die der Darstellung von Zeus Nikephoros auf anderen Münzen seleukidischer Herrscher angeglichen ist.³² Die Identifikation als Tyche wurde von Fleischer³³ herausgearbeitet. Meyer³⁴ hat in ihrer grundlegenden Arbeit über die Tyche von Antiochia dargelegt, dass Demetrios I. Soter³⁵ (162–150 v.Ch.) als neues Bild auf dem Revers seiner Tetradrachmen die Göttin Tyche darstellt und diese nicht mehr identisch mit der Schicksalsgöttin aus griechischer Zeit ist, sondern eine Wandlung vollzogen hat.

²⁷ Le Rider: *Suse sous les Séleucides et les Parthes*.

²⁸ Sellwood 1980: 55, 60, 65, Shore 1993, erwähnt diese Münzen überhaupt nicht.

²⁹ Le Rider 1965: 142 ff, s. auch Sinisi 2008: 233.

³⁰ Assar 2006b: 109.

³¹ Verschiedene Arbeiten haben inzwischen nachgewiesen, dass es sich bei der bei Demetrios I. dargestellten Göttin um Tyche handelt: so Fleischer 1986: 705; Meyer 2006: 363; Bollatti 2003).

³² Meyer 2006: 360 f; vgl. Münzen von Antiochos IV.

³³ Fleischer 1986: 699 ff.

³⁴ Meyer 2006: 360 ff.

³⁵ Funck 1994: 251.

Die Tyche des Demetrios I. ist nun eine auf das Glück des einzelnen Menschen bezogene Göttin geworden. Bei Demetrios I. weist sie auf das persönliche Glück des Königs hin. 13 Jahre war er als Geißel von den Römern gefangen gehalten worden, bis ihm die Flucht auf einem Schiff gelang, die ihn ins Heimatland zurückbrachte.³⁶ Als Hinweis auf diese gefährliche Seereise sieht man die Göttin auf einem Stuhl sitzen, bei dem eine Fußstütze ein geflügeltes weibliches Wesen³⁷ zeigt, das unten wie ein Triton geformt ist und an einen Schiffbug erinnert. Entscheidendes Attribut der Tyche ist die Cornucopia, als Haarschmuck trägt sie einen griechischen Haarknoten, kein Polos.

Entscheidend in der weiteren Analyse von Meyer und insofern von Bedeutung in der Betrachtung parthischer Münzen sind nun folgende drei Aussagen:

1. Die persönliche Tyche (wie auf den Münzen von Demetrios I.) lässt sich ableiten von der Tyche von Antiochia.³⁸
2. Die Stadttyche, erkennbar an der Mauerkrone, „ist eine Spezialform der Schicksalsgöttin Tyche“³⁹ und
3. „setzt — als Tyche einer Gruppe von Individuen — die Konzeption einer persönlichen Tyche voraus.“³⁸

Damit ergibt sich auch eine zeitlich definierte Rangfolge. Personifizierte Tychen sind ab der Mitte des 3. JH v.Ch. beschrieben, während die Stadttychen erst in den letzten beiden Jahrhunderten des Hellenismus sich herausbilden. Meyer vertritt weiterhin die Auffassung, dass ein Einfluss orientalischer Göttinnen bei der Ausbildung der Stadttyche eher unwahrscheinlich ist und auf „prinzipielle Bedenken stößt.“⁴⁰ Die Mauerkrone, die von der Tyche von Antiochia übernommen wurde, ist das einzige nichtgriechische Element, das einen orientalischen Hintergrund hat.⁴¹ Der orientalische Hintergrund der Mauerkrone hat als Basis das Wohlergehen einer Stadt, ein Bild, das in mesopotamischer Literatur hinlänglich bekannt ist. Das Bild der Mauerkrone ist ein so einprägsames Bild, dass es problemlos von den Griechen in die Bildgebung der Tyche eingebunden werden konnte, die als Idee für eine Stadt, die „nicht von Vertrauen und

³⁶ Fleischer 1986: 705.

³⁷ Meyer 2006: 350.

³⁸ Meyer 2006: 354.

³⁹ Meyer 2006: 354.

⁴⁰ Meyer 2006: 354.

⁴¹ Meyer 2006: 164.

Hoffnung auf ‚glückliche Fügung‘ sondern von der Einsicht in die notwendigen Voraussetzungen für das Wohlergehen eines Gemeinwesens geprägt ist.“ (Zitat Marion Meyer: Seite 178)

Diese Forschungsergebnisse lassen eine Entwicklungsgeschichte der Tyche auf parthischen Münzen wahrscheinlich werden, die – auf der Basis der Münzen von Demetrios I. – ihren Anfang bei den Münzen der Interregnal Issue nehmen und in konsequenter Weise fortgeführt werden bis zu Mithradates II. In dieses Bild fügt sich nun lückenlos auch die Münzprägung von Demetrios II. Nikator (145-138 v.Ch.) ein, die im Reversbild Tyche mit der Cornucopia im selben Darstellungsmuster wie bei seinem Vater zeigt.⁴² Eine zusätzliche Unterstützung für diese Entwicklung bringt die politische Verbindung zwischen den Parthern und dem Seleukiden. Demetrios II., der anfänglich Gefangener des parthischen Herrschers Mithradates I. war, wurde später mit dessen Tochter Rhodogune verheiratet,⁴³ vermutlich eine politische Hochzeit. Die Darstellungen Mithradates I. im griechischen Habit laufen parallel mit der Übernahme von religiösen Bildinhalten aus seleukidischer Münzprägung. Dies lässt zumindest wahrscheinlich werden, dass die Idee einer persönlichen Tyche bei Mithradates I. bekannt war und auch Widerhall bei ihm und den nachfolgenden parthischen Königen fand.

Eine solche Annahme und die Ausführungen von Meyer klärt allerdings noch nicht die Frage, ob die Parther zu diesem Zeitpunkt in der Göttin Tyche Aspekte einer eigenen parthischen Gottheit gesehen haben, oder welche Göttin damit gemeint sein kann. Politische Aspekte in der Übernahme von Tyche auf die Münzen sind nicht von der Hand zu weisen, wenn man sich vor Augen führt, dass die Parther innerhalb weniger Jahre Mesopotamien und Babylon eroberten und sich mit der ansässigen griechischen Bevölkerung arrangieren mussten. Die angeführten Argumente und Nachweise widersprechen in jedem Fall der Überlegung, dass bereits die Seleukiden mit der Tyche eine orientalische Göttin verbunden haben.⁴⁴

Anlass zu vielfältigen Diskussionen und unterschiedlichen Interpretationen hat eine einerseits mit Bart, andererseits mit typisch weiblichen

⁴² Allerdings verwendet Demetrios II. das Bild der sitzenden Tyche nur in der ersten Regierungsphase (145 – 140 v.Ch.), ansonsten ist Apollon oder Zeus dargestellt.

⁴³ Olbrycht 1998: 84.

⁴⁴ Sinisi 2008: 242 führt dies anhand der bärtigen Göttin (S17.1-3) aus.

Attributen ausgestattete Gottheit auf Tetradrachmen⁴⁵ von Phraates II. gegeben (S17.1–S17.3). Aus ikonographischer Sicht erinnert die Darstellung an die seleukidischen Münzen mit der Darstellung von Zeus, und so nimmt es nicht wunder, dass die Figur — mit Betonung des Bartes als männliche Kennzeichnung — mit dem Gott Zeus identifiziert wurde.⁴⁶ Andererseits ähnelt die Darstellung aufgrund weiblicher Attribute der Göttin Tyche, die als solche bei Demetrios I. und II. identifiziert wurde.⁴⁷

Die Betonung, dass es sich um eine weibliche Gottheit handelt, ist nicht neu und bekam in jüngerer Zeit Unterstützung von Sinisi.⁴⁸ Dieser weist auf die eindeutigen weiblichen Attribute, die sichtbaren Brüste und die Kleidung hin. Er postuliert, dass mit der bärtig dargestellten Göttin die mesopotamischen Göttin Isthara/Nanaia gemeint sein kann, die in Texten als bärtig beschrieben wird. Allerdings kann diesen Überlegungen auch auf der Basis der vorweg dargestellten Überlegungen und der weiteren Analysen nicht gefolgt werden.⁴⁹

Die Machtübernahme Mithradates I. in Mesopotamien mit der Eroberung Babylons um 141 v.Ch. hat sicherlich keine rasche Wandlung von Glaubensinhalten der neuen Herrscher als auch der Bevölkerung in Seleukia⁵⁰ nach sich gezogen. Es ist im Gegenteil sogar anzunehmen, dass in dieser Phase mit den Abbildungen von griechisch aussehenden Gottheiten auf Tetradrachmen primär keine eigenen religiösen, sondern politische Absichten verbunden waren.⁵¹ Während Tetradrachmen von Mithradates I. nur Herkules zeigen, präsentieren die Rückseiten seiner Drachmen den nach links sitzenden Zeus mit einem Adler auf der rechten Hand.⁵² Geprägt wurden diese Münzen zwischen 140–138 v.Ch. Nach dem Tod Mithradates I. im Jahr 138 v.Ch. übernahm sein Sohn Phraates II. den Thron. Tetradrachmen

⁴⁵ Tetradrachmen von Phraates II. (138–127 v.Ch.) S17.1 bis S17.3.

⁴⁶ s. hierzu die Ausführungen von Sinisi 2008: 235.

⁴⁷ Meyer 2006: 359 f.

⁴⁸ Umstritten ist, ob es sich um eine männliche oder weibliche Gottheit handelt, unklar, welche Gottheit damit gemeint ist. Weitere Ausführungen bei Sinisi 2008: 231–247.

⁴⁹ Sinisi gibt selbst zu bedenken, dass es auf Münzen keine vorhergehenden Darstellungen mit Bezug zur mesopotamischen Göttin Nanaia gibt.

⁵⁰ Alle Tetradrachmen sind in Seleukia geprägt.

⁵¹ Vgl. Dąbrowa 2008; sowie die Ausführungen von Winkelmann 2006, die auf die politischen Bezüge hinweisen, wenn man die auf den Münzen dargestellten Inschriften und Waffen analysiert.

⁵² Sellwood S13.6–13.10.

mit der Darstellung von Apollo wurde von ihm in Susa geprägt,⁵³ in Seleukia hingegen die bärtige Göttin.

Historisch gesehen war die Zeit von Phraates II. um 130 v.Ch. mit Gebietsverlusten von Medien und ganz Mesopotamien verbunden, als es dem Seleukiden Antiochus VII. Sidetes gelang diese Gebiete zu unterwerfen.⁵⁴ Phraates II. eroberte innerhalb kurzer Zeit Mesopotamien zurück und konnte damit das Seleukidenreich endgültig zerschlagen. Die Münzen von Phraates II. tragen kein Datum, es kann vermutet werden, dass die Tetradrachmen mit der bärtigen Göttin in der Zeit geprägt wurden, nachdem er die Siege errungen hatte. Die Prägezeit könnte damit auf einen Zeitraum von ca. 3 Jahren (bis zu seinem Tod) begrenzt werden.⁵⁵

Der Gedanke, dass nicht religiöse, sondern politische oder andere Phänomene hinter den Bild der bärtigen Göttin zu vermuten sind, erscheint wesentlich überzeugender und gibt Raum für weitere Erklärungsversuche. Die Zeit um 130 v.Ch. und den Monaten danach war geprägt durch Kämpfe um die Vormacht in Mesopotamien. Wurde mit der Herstellung eines Prägestempels begonnen, der Zeus darstellen sollte, wofür die Darstellung eines Thronstuhles sprechen würde. Wurde dann aufgrund des Sieges von Phraates II. entschieden, doch eine Tyche darzustellen? Die Darstellungen von Zeus und Tyche ähneln sich bis auf den Bart sehr. Waren menschliche Fehler die Ursache?

Nach dem Tod von Phraates II. kam es nach Sellwood ab 127 v.Ch. zu einer kurzfristigen Zwischenherrschaft (Interregnal Issue) von einem nicht bekannten König⁵⁶ (bzw. Bagasis⁵⁵) oder zu posthumen Ausgaben im Bildmuster von Mithradates I. Sellwood selbst schreibt, dass es offensichtlich nach dem Tod Phraates II. zu politischen Unsicherheiten gekommen war, die möglicherweise einen Einfluss auf die Münzprägungen hatten und die die Münzstätten ein fiktives Portrait des verstorbenen Königs (Mithradates I.) prägen ließen.⁵⁷ Wenn letztlich Erklärungen für die

⁵³ In Susa wurden auch Chalkous Münzen mit der Abbildung von Hermes und einer nicht näher definierten Göttin geprägt, viele Münzen mit dem Reversbild des Bogenschützen in Ekbatana.

⁵⁴ Bengtson 1977: 496.

⁵⁵ Assar 2006b: 108. Assar identifiziert Bagasis als Folgeherrscher von Phraates II. (s. Text) Für die S17 Tetradrachmen vermutet er einen Zeitraum zwischen Sept. 129 und Oktober 128 v.Ch (S99).

⁵⁶ Sellwood 1980: S54 und Parthia.com: Seite: Interregnal Issue.

⁵⁷ Assar 2006b: 8. Assar bestimmt den Herrscher als Bagasis, Bruder von Mithradates II.

bärtige Göttin offen bleiben müssen, erscheint eine nicht-religiöse Ursache wahrscheinlicher.

Im Ergebnis sind grundlegende Änderungen religiösen Glaubens in den historisch aufgezeigten Kriegswirren in Mesopotamien im Zeitraum zwischen 141 v.Ch. und 129 v.Ch. kaum denkbar und eher unwahrscheinlich. Die quasi Neueinführung der ost-iranischen zoroastrischen Göttin Nana (als Gegenpart zur alten mesopotamischen Göttin Ishtar/ Nanaia – mit Bart!) unter der Herrschaft von Phraates II. kann wenig überzeugen, wenngleich dem Grundgedanken, dass hinter hellenistisch abgebildeten Gottheiten letztendlich parthische Gottheiten stehen, uneingeschränkt zugestimmt werden kann. Wesentlich wahrscheinlicher ist hingegen eine über 80 Jahre hinweg verlaufende lineare Entwicklung der Tyche von Demetrios I. an bis hin zu Mithradates II., denn auch dieser König bildet Tyche⁵⁸ auf den Rückseiten seiner Tetradrachmen S23.1-2 ab (s. Abb. 3-7). Da die Münzen von Mithradates II. nicht datiert sind, der Herrscher sich jedoch mit kurzem Bart und jugendlichem Gesicht präsentiert, ist zu vermuten, dass die Münzen aus der Anfangszeit seiner Herrschaft stammen. Außer diesen Tetradrachmen werden von Mithradates II. nur wenige niedrigwertige Münzen herausgegeben, die entweder Nike oder Apollo zeigen, während die meisten Münzen den Bogenschützen zeigen.⁵⁹

Aufgrund der dargestellten Jugendlichkeit Mithradates II. kann man für die Prägung der Tetradrachme einen Zeitraum zwischen 123 und 120 v.Ch. postulieren.⁶⁰ Damit ergibt sich (ab spätestens 120 v.Ch.), dass für die nächsten fast 50 Jahre auf Tetradrachmen keine Göttin mehr gezeigt wird (dies beinhaltet die Tetradrachmen des Herrschers Mithradates II., die nach 120 v.Ch. geprägt wurden; Gotarzes I. (95-90 v.Ch.); Orodes I. (90-80 v.Ch.); unbekannte Könige I. und II. (80-70 v.Ch.) sowie Sinatruces (77-70 v.Ch.). Lediglich auf einem Teil der niedrigwertigen Münzen werden noch griechische Gottheiten gezeigt.⁶¹ Zusätzlich zeigen Münzen dieser

⁵⁸ Sellwood 1980: 65, nennt sie „goddess“.

⁵⁹ Bei Mithradates: S24.45, Chalkous = Nike; S27.27 Chalkous = Apollo; S27.28 Chalkous = Nike; S28.11 Dichalkous = Nike.

⁶⁰ Auch die Diskussion von Assar 2006b: 120 ergibt einen selben Zeitraum.

⁶¹ Gotarzes I.: keine Tetradrachme; S33.13 Dichalkous = Nike; Orodes I. Tetradrachme mit Bogenschütze; S31.16 Chalkous = Nike; S31.22 Chalkous Göttin mit Ruder (Tyche?) S31.23 Chalkous Herme; unknown King I: keine Gottheit; unknown King II: S30.33/34; Chalkous Artemis mit Leier, S30.37 Chalkous Nike, S30.40 „goddess“; Sinatruces S34.10/12 Chalkous Artemis.



Abb. 3. Demetrios Soter I. (162-150 v.Ch.).



Abb. 4. Phraates II. (S17.1 var.).



Abb. 5. Artabanus I. (S21.1).



Abb. 6. Mithradates II. (S23.2).

Könige – ebenfalls mit niedrigem Werten — Darstellungen des geflügelten Pferdes Pegasus, das ebenso wie das Bild des Hermestabes auf die griechische Götterwelt verweist.

II. c) Geschichtlich-kulturelle Entwicklung des Partherreiches in der II. Phase von Mithradates I. bis Darius (171 bis 70 v.Ch.)

Die 33-jährige Regierungszeit von Mithradates I. wird als eine der ganz entscheidenden Jahre in parthischer Geschichtsschreibung angesehen.⁶² Mithradates I. hatte offensichtlich eine dynamische und kraftvolle Persönlichkeit, mit der es ihm gelang, ein neues, großherrschaftliches Reich aufzubauen. 155 v.Ch. brachte er vermutlich das Gebiet von Media und Margiane⁶³ unter Kontrolle. 148 v.Ch. beendete er seinen Krieg gegen die Meder mit der Besetzung und Eroberung der medischen Hauptstadt Ekbatana. Als Zeichen seiner Herrschaft ließ er seine eigenen Münzen in Ekbatana im Jahr 148/147 v.Ch. prägen.

Mithradates I. erweiterte das Parthische Reich durch Eroberungen des westlichen Irans, sowie von Teilen des Graeko-Baktrischen Reiches. Im Jahr 141 v.Chr. gelangte Mesopotamien mit Babylon unter parthische Herrschaft. Mithradates I. eroberte die seleukidische Stadt Seleukia am

⁶² Schippmann 1980: 23.

⁶³ Ghirshman 1962: 33.

Tigris und prägte im folgenden Jahr dort Tetradrachmen. Die Münzen werden im seleukidischen Stil geprägt, erstmalig werden griechische aussehende Gottheiten auf den Revers der Münzen geprägt (s. obige Ausführungen). Dies gibt einen wesentlichen Hinweis, dass der Partherkönig und die Arsakiden sich als Nachfolger der Seleukiden darstellen wollen und sich politisch geschickt mit den Griechen arrangieren.

Folgende Botschaften lassen sich aus den Münzen herauslesen und stehen im Einklang mit übrigen Forschungsergebnissen: Der Bezug zum Nomadentum wird geringer. Mithradates I. präsentiert sich ganz im Stil eines hellenistischen Königs. Der Reichsgründer König Arsaces I. wird auf der Rückseite der Münzen weiter mit einem „soft hat“ dargestellt. Die Vielfalt der auf den Münzen dargestellten Bögen – medischer Zeremonialbogen, asymmetrisch-skythischer Reflexbogen und symmetrisch hellenistischer Reflexbogen bleibt, der Anspruch der Partherkönige als Nachfolger der Achämeniden, Hellenen und Bewahrer der Steppentradition wird somit weiter gepflegt.⁶⁴

Die Machtansprüche der Parther nehmen zu und werden auch auf den Münzen deutlich: Der Reichsgründer Arsaces sitzt nun auf einem Omphalos,⁶⁵ dem Nabel der Welt, der bei Mithradates I. und seinen Nachfolgern Phraates I., Artabanus I. und Mithradates II. dargestellt wird. Spätere Könige verwenden diese Symbolik nicht mehr. Auch hier kommt die Propaganda klar zum Ausdruck: Ich, der König, sitze im Machtzentrum, ich bin das Machtzentrum! Diese Symbolik heißt aber auch: Zeus oder Apollo, die sonst auf einem Omphalos als Zeichen der Macht sitzen, haben diesen Platz zugunsten des Königs räumen müssen. Trotz aller Hinwendung zum Hellenismus wird hier ein bereits ein Aspekt der königlichen Macht deutlich, die wir später wiederfinden bei Phraates III., wobei hier Zeus⁶⁶ durch den König vom Thron „verstoßen“ wird.

Die Orientierung zum Griechentum wird in allen Aspekten des auf Münzen dargestellten Königs sichtbar. Mithradates I. trägt nunmehr ein Diadem, das bei den Griechen Zeichen der königlichen Würde war, aber

⁶⁴ Winkelmann 2006: 140.

⁶⁵ Der Omphalos hat auch einen Bezug zum Apollo Tempel in Delphi, hierin wird ebenso die Hinwendung zum Hellenismus sichtbar wie mit der Darstellung von griechischen Gottheiten.

⁶⁶ bzw. die hellenistische Tyche, wenn man die Münzen von der Interregnal Issue bis Mithradates II. zum Vergleich heranzieht.



Abb.7. Mithradates I., S13.2, Rückseite: Herakles mit Keule und Löwenfell.

auch in Assyrien als königliches Insignium getragen wurde.⁶⁷ Er präsentiert sich dem Volk in griechischer Kleidung (Münzen ab S11), lediglich der Bart lässt ihn als fremden Herrscher erkennen. Die Inschriften seiner Münzen sind griechisch mit propagandistischem Inhalt, z.B. ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ⁶⁸ = von dem großen König Arsaces, dem Griechenfreund (s. Abb. 7) Dies zeigt die politische Absicht des Partherkönigs, die Griechen zu Freunden und Verbündeten zu machen.⁶⁹

Auch die Nachfolger von Mithradates I. setzen auf die Zuwendung zum Hellenismus. So trägt eine Münze von Artabanos I. (127-124 v.Ch.) die Inschrift: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ – ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ – ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ – ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ (= von dem großen König Arsaces, dem Wohltäter, der Griechenfreund). Mit dieser Propagandabotschaft von Artabanos I., der nicht nur Freund der Griechen, sondern auch ihr Wohltäter sein will, soll den griechischen Bürgern jegliche Sorge vor den Besatzern genommen werden.

Unter Mithradates II. (123-88 v.Ch.), Sohn des Artabanos I., kam es während seiner 35-jährigen Herrschaft zu einer großen Blüte, Ausdehnung

⁶⁷ Curtis 1998: 61.

⁶⁸ (nach Sellwood: Inschrift 13 i).

⁶⁹ Dąbrowa 2008: 25.

und Stabilisierung des Parthischen Reiches. Nach mehreren Eroberungen im Osten und Westen erstreckte sich das Parthische Reich von Mesopotamien bis nach Baktrien. Mit der Ausdehnung nach Westen trafen die Parther zum ersten Mal auf die Römer, mit denen im Laufe der weiteren Geschichte zahlreiche Kriege geführt wurden. In der Regierungszeit Mithradates II. kam es zu einem wirtschaftlichen Aufschwung, ein zuvor nie da gewesener Handel mit den verschiedensten Gütern blühte auf der Seidenstraße zwischen China und dem Mittelmeer auf. Parthische Gesandte besuchten den chinesischen Hof.⁷⁰

Die Ikonographie der Münzen dieser Phase zeigt, dass es mit der Ausdehnung des Reiches auch ein anderes Bewusstsein in der Selbstdarstellung gibt. Mithradates II. lässt sich zwar anfänglich mit einem Diadem (S24-S27) darstellen, die Münzen S28 und S29 zeigen ihn jedoch mit einer Tiara, die typisch für die zentralasiatischen Herrscher ist. Dies bedeutet eine Rückbesinnung auf die eigenen Wurzeln, ein Abnehmen des griechischen Einflusses wird sichtbar.⁷¹ Seine Münzen tragen seit Eroberung von Seleukia die griechische Inschrift ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ = König der Könige. Diese Bezeichnung, die schon die achämenidischen Könige gebraucht haben, lässt erkennen, dass die parthischen Herrscher den Bezug zu den Achämeniden herausstellen wollen.⁷² Ferner wird deutlich, dass Mithradates II. der oberste König ist und über die anderen parthischen lokalen Könige herrscht, und sich damit die gesamte Machtstruktur des Parthischen Reiches geändert hat.

Die Zeit nach Mithradates II. ab ca. 90 v.Ch. bis zur Herrschaft von Orodes II. wird oft auch als die dunkle Zeit Parthiens bezeichnet, da es keine ganz klaren Übersichten über die nachfolgenden Herrscher gibt.⁷³

II. d) *Zusammenfassende Beurteilung der zweiten Phase in religiöser, geschichtlicher und kultureller Gesamtsicht*

Die Analyse der religiösen Ikonographie der Münzen im Abgleich mit den geschichtlichen und kulturellen Fakten in der II. Phase zeigt ebenfalls

⁷⁰ Curtis 1998: 61.

⁷¹ Olbrycht 1998: 102.

⁷² Curtis 1998: 62.

⁷³ Assar 2006a: 55.

deutlich, dass hier synchrone Vorgänge stattfinden und nachgewiesen werden können.

Mit der Eroberung griechisch beeinflusster Gebiete und Stabilisierung der Macht im Westen des Reiches findet sich ab 141 v.Ch. für etwas mehr als 20 Jahre eine eindeutige Betonung des Hellenismus, sowohl im Lebensstil als auch im religiösen Kontext. Mithradates I. zeigt den nackten Herakles auf seinen Tetradrachmen und den sitzenden Zeus mit einem Adler auf der ausgestreckten Hand auf seinen Drachmen. Es folgt die Übernahme der Göttin Tyche aus dem Bildprogramm der Seleukiden Demetrios I. und II. in die Münzprägung der Interregal Issue (bzw. Bagasis) bis hin zu den ersten Regierungsjahren Mithradates II. (ca. 120 v.Ch.). Die Darstellung der bärtigen Göttin bei Phraates II., die wie Tyche imponiert, bleibt ein ungelöster Sonderfall, wenngleich weniger religiöse, sondern eher politische Gründe oder menschliche Fehler in der Herstellung der Münzen vermutet werden können.

Die bei Demetrios I. und II. gezeigte Tyche ist als persönliche Tyche zu deuten. Die direkte Bildübernahme der Göttin Tyche — die Sellwood noch als Demeter definierte — durch die parthischen Herrscher ab 138 v.Ch. soll vermutlich deutlich machen, dass das persönliche Glück der parthischen Herrscher zum Sieg über Mesopotamien geführt hat, eine Bildsprache, die die Griechen sicherlich ebenso wie die Parther verstehen konnten.

Die aufgezeigten Überlegungen lassen es wahrscheinlich erscheinen, dass mit der dargestellten sitzenden Tyche bzw. der Darstellung von Zeus oder Herakles noch keine synkretistischen parthischen Götterbilder geschaffen wurden, da die Gesamtzeit, in denen griechische Götter gezeigt werden, nur wenig länger als 20 Jahre dauert. Die sitzende Tyche sollte daher zur besseren Kennzeichnung als „**hellenistische Tyche**“ bezeichnet werden (im Gegensatz zur „**parthischen Tyche**“ ab Phraates III.). Entscheidend für diese Sichtweise ist, dass nach 120 v.Ch. Gottheiten auf Tetradrachmen bei Mithradates II. und bei den nachfolgenden Königen für die nächsten 50 Jahre nicht mehr auftauchen und nur noch auf einigen niedrigwertigen Münzen griechischen Gottheiten dargestellt werden. Auch eine politische Sichtweise unterstützt diese Überlegungen, denn die Parther mussten sich der Unterstützung der Griechen versichern und es hätte wenig Sinn gemacht, in den ersten Jahren der Besatzung über Mesopotamien auch eine religiöse Konfrontation vom Zaun zu brechen. Ohnehin hätte eine solche Haltung der parthischen Grundüberzeugung widersprochen, die als Basis die Toleranz der Religion der eroberten

Bevölkerung beinhaltete.⁷⁴ All dies macht es unwahrscheinlich, dass bereits in diesen ersten 20 Jahren der parthischen Herrschaft in Mesopotamien synkretistische Götterbilder entstanden, in denen die Parther in den hellenistisch aussehenden Gottheiten ihre eigenen Götter identifizierten.

III. Phase — von Phraates III. (70 v.Ch.) bis Vonones II. (ca. 51 n.Ch.)

III. a) Religiöse Bezüge auf Münzen der III. Phase

1) Phraates III.

Nachdem auf Tetradrachmen über einen Zeitraum von fast 50 Jahren keine Gottheiten dargestellt wurden, wird erstmalig bei Phraates III. (70-57 v.Ch.) auf einer Tetradrachme (S39.1) wieder eine Göttin, Tyche, dargestellt. Allerdings ist nun ein kompletter Bruch mit der bislang fassbaren Darstellung der Göttin feststellbar. Tyche, die eine Mauerkrone⁷⁵ trägt, steht nun hinter dem König, der von ihr abgewandt auf dem Thron sitzt und in der linken Hand ein Zepter hält.

Die Göttin kränzt ihn mit einem Diadem, in der linken Hand hält sie ebenfalls ein Zepter,⁷⁶ das von der Länge her ihrer Körpergröße entspricht. (s. Abb. 8). Die beiden Kennzeichen, Mauerkrone und Zepter, kennzeichnen die Göttin als Stadttyche.

Frappierend ist, dass der Herrscher nunmehr den Thronszitz eingenommen hat. Hat der König den Platz von Zeus eingenommen? Die Haltung des Königs gleicht der klassischen seleukidischen Darstellung von Zeus.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Allgemein anerkannte Haltung der Parther, so Wiesehöfer 2010: 33.

⁷⁵ Es gibt schon von Mithradates I. eine Bronze Münze, die in Susa geprägt wurde und einen weiblichen Kopf mit einer Mauerkrone zeigt (S12.26). Le Rider (1965) — zit. bei Sinisi 2008: 231, definiert die Göttin als flügellose Nike, Sellwood als Tyche. Da es sich nur um eine einzige Münze handelt und bis Phraates III. keine weiteren Darstellungen mit einer Krone auftauchen, wird die Bedeutung, die mit dieser Münze verbunden ist, in diesem Zeitraum gering sein.

⁷⁶ Sellwood beschreibt das Zepter von der Göttin nicht (S119), in Parthia.com wird dies als Speer beschrieben, sieht jedoch gleich aus in der 3 blättrigen Spitze wie das Zepter des Königs, daher wird es hier als Zepter definiert.

⁷⁷ dies erinnert auch an die Drachmen von Mithradates I. (S13.6-10) der Zeus mit dem Adler zeigt oder generell an die seleukidische klassische Darstellung von Apollo und Zeus; ebenso: Sinisi 2008: 232.



Abb. 8. Phraates III. S39.1.

In dieses Bild passt, dass der König — wie Zeus auch — einen Vogel in der rechten Hand trägt.⁷⁸ Ist es der Adler, den Zeus kennzeichnet oder ist es der Avestische Veragna, der göttliche Falke?⁷⁹ Der König präsentiert sich ferner mit einer Tiara, die typisches Zeichen der Königswürde im Osten des Reiches war,⁸⁰ deutliches Zeichen der Abwendung vom Hellenismus. Ein weitere wichtige Botschaft fällt auf: Der unter dem Königstuhl⁸¹ geprägte Begriff ΘΕΟΥ verweist direkt auf den König!

Was bedeutet bei den Parthern der Begriff „Gott“? Die Beantwortung dieser Frage blieb bei den Analysen der II. Phase (vgl. Kapitel II. a) noch offen. Eine mögliche Klärung dieser Fragen kann der Begriff ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ bringen, der erstmalig bei Artabanus I. (127-124 v.Ch.) auf den Münzen erscheint und dann durchgehend bis zum Ende des Reiches von parthischen Königen verwendet wird. ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ kann mit „Erscheinung Gottes“⁸² übersetzt werden und war bereits beim Seleukiden-König Antiochus IV. Epiphanos (ca. 175-164 v.Ch.) Bestandteil seines

⁷⁸ Assar 2006a: 93. Assar vermutet, dass Phraates diese Münzen als Zeichen seines Sieges über Arsaces IV. geprägt hat. Der Adler übernimmt die Funktion der Siegesgöttin Nike. Denkbar ist im Gesamtkontext eher, dass mit dem Adler Veragna, der königliche Falke gemeint ist. (vgl. Curtis 2007b: 423).

⁷⁹ Curtis 2007b: 423. Entspricht Fußnote 78.

⁸⁰ Curtis 1998: 62.

⁸¹ Auch der Königstuhl hat eine Änderung erfahren und verweist auf die achämenidische Tradition: vgl. Curtis 2007b: 419.

⁸² Wick 2008: 14.

Herrschernamens.⁸³ In Untersuchungen zu Antiochos IV. konnte nachgewiesen werden, dass sich der König nicht als Gott bezeichnen wollte, sondern darauf hinweisen wollte, dass er seine Stellung einer Gottesnähe verdankt und seine Wahl zum König durch eine Gottheit bestätigt wird.⁸⁴

Es ist wahrscheinlich, dass Mithradates I. mit dem Begriff ΘΕΟΥ aufzeigen wollte, dass er seinen Thron durch einen göttlichen Bezug erhalten habe. Diese ihm übertragene göttliche Macht konnte auch auf Nachfahren übertragen werden, die sich dementsprechend ΘΕΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ nannten.⁸⁵ Eine bildhafte Darstellung dieser Verbindung zu einer Gottheit war den Parthern zu diesem Zeitpunkt fremd, so dass dies nur in Schriftform geschehen konnte.

Erst mit der Akzeptanz und Übernahme der hellenistischen, in Menschenform dargestellten Gottheiten, wurde es den Parthern möglich, auch eine bildliche Entsprechung dieser Gottesnähe und der Übergabe der Macht und des Glücks an den König zu zeigen. Erstmals bei Phraates III. und dann auf den Tetradrachmen aller Könige bis zum Ende des Partherreiches wird auf Münzen fassbar, dass die Parther ihren eigenen Glauben und das Verhältnis zwischen dem König und einer Göttin in Bildersprache klar herausstellen und definieren. Ein Bezug zum Zoroastrismus ist unübersehbar, in dem der König der Träger „der göttlichen Herrlichkeit“ und des „königlichen Glücks“ ist.⁸⁶ Curtis hat überzeugend dargelegt, dass das zoroastrische Bild der *khvarrah*, der „God given Glory oder Fortune“ hinter den im hellenistischen Stil abgebildeten Gottheiten stehen dürfte.⁸⁷ Das Überreichen eines Palmenwedels oder Diadems, das neu in die Ikonographie aufgenommen wurde, ist die bildliche Übergabe der *khvarrah* an den König und stellt sicher, dass dieser der legitime Herrscher der Parther ist.

⁸³ Auch Gaius Julius Antiochos IV. Epiphanes, der zwischen 38-72 als letzter König der Kommagene regierte, hatte diesen Titel in seinem Namen.

⁸⁴ Im seleukidischen Reich, dessen Münz-Ikonographie von den Parthern übernommen wurde, war „der König kein Gott, sondern verdankte seine Stellung seiner Gottesnähe oder der „Wahl“ durch eine Gottheit“ zit. aus: Antiochos IV. Epiphanes, eine politische Biographie, von: Mittag 2006: 137

⁸⁵ Die Genealogie von Assar (s. Tabelle 4) lässt diese vom Vater auf den Sohn übertrage „Göttlichkeit“ aufgrund der Verwandtschaftsverhältnisse z.T. besser nachvollziehen als bei Zugrundelegung bei der Genealogie von Sellwood (s. Tabelle 3).

⁸⁶ Curtis 2007b: 413. „God given Glory and kingly Fortune“.

⁸⁷ Curtis 2007b: 422

Der *khvarrah* stellt daher nicht nur das Glück des Königs dar, sondern ist eine notwendige Quelle für die Macht und Autorität des Herrschers.⁸⁸

In der Gesamtsicht der verschiedenen Bildelemente auf dieser Münze Phraates III. wird klar, dass hier ganz neue religiöse Symbole aufgezeigt werden, die — bis auf die hellenistische Darstellungsweise — kaum noch etwas mit dem Hellenismus gemein haben. Das Verhältnis zwischen dem Herrscher und der Göttin ist klar definiert, denn es ist die Göttin, die dem König das Glück bringt. Eindrucksvoller hätten die Parther die Abwendung von griechischen Göttern und die Darstellung ihrer eigenen Glaubensbezüge kaum darstellen können und der Bezug zum Zoroastrismus wird hier evident.

Die vorgestellte Analyse findet ihre weitergehende Bestätigung in der Feststellung, dass in dieser III. Phase eine weitgehende Abwendung von den griechischen Gottheiten erkennbar ist. Auf den Silbermünzen sind Darstellungen von Apollo, Zeus, Herakles, Athena und Hermes verschwunden (s. Tab. 1, Anhang). Lediglich Nike taucht noch auf Silbermünzen bis Artabanus II. (bis 38 n.Ch.) auf, danach nur noch eher selten auf geringwertigen Münzen. Die parthische Tyche ist danach auf fast allen Münzen der Herrscher bis Ende des Parthischen Reiches zu finden. Allerdings verbleibt die wichtige Frage: welche Göttin ist mit Tyche gemeint? Handelt es sich nun um ein synkretistisches Göttinnenbild, das von Parthern und Griechen gleichermaßen angenommen werden konnte? Welche Eigenschaften verkörpert diese Tyche mit der Mauerkrone? Vor allem: welche parthische Göttin kann damit gemeint sein?

Wichtig erscheint an dieser Stelle auf die Funde aus der Kommagene hinzuweisen, die einen Synkretismus zwischen griechischen Göttern und Gottheiten aus dem Zoroastrismus in der Regierungszeit von Antiochus I., König von Kommagene (69–34 v.Ch.) nachweisen: Ich habe diese göttlichen Bilder von Zeus-Ormasdes und Apollo-Mithra-Helios-Hermes und von Artagnes-Herakles-Ares aufgestellt...⁸⁹ Diese Gleichsetzung göttlicher Namen wird um 65/64 n.Ch. angesetzt.⁹⁰

Diese zeitliche Parallelität lässt es wahrscheinlich erscheinen, dass mit dem Auftreten der neuartig konzipierten „parthischen Tyche“ bei Phraates III. (70–57 v.Ch.) ein synkretistisches Phänomen auch bei den

⁸⁸ Soudavar 2010.

⁸⁹ Curtis 2007a: 15.

⁹⁰ Waldmann 1973:181.

Parthern beobachtet werden kann. Dies ist umso wahrscheinlicher, da die Kommagene in dieser Zeit unter parthischem Einfluss stand und Antiochus I. seine Tochter Laodike dem parthischen Herrscher Orodes II. (58/57-38/37 v.Chr.) zur Frau gab.

Im Ergebnis kann festgestellt werden, dass ab Phraates III. ein Synkretismus zwischen der griechischen Ursprungs-Tyche, die bereits schon Wandlungen in hellenistischer Zeit durchgemacht hat, und einer parthischen Göttin besteht, wenngleich es bislang immer noch keinen konkreten Hinweis gibt, wer diese parthische Göttin ist.

2) Göttliche Investitur durch Nike

Ein neues Bildprogramm mit religiösen Bezügen finden wir bei Drachmen (S42) von Orodes II. (57-38 v.Ch.). Zum ersten Mal wird auf den Vorderseiten der Münzen die geflügelte Göttin Nike bei der Investitur⁹¹ des Königs dargestellt, sie krönt ihn mit einem Kranz, die göttliche Macht geht direkt auf den Herrscher über. Eine solche Investitur finden wir ebenfalls bei Phraatakes (2 v.Ch.-4 n.Ch.) (s. Abb. 9), wobei sogar zwei Niken vor und hinter dem Kopf des Königs schweben. Bei den Münzen von Musa und Phraatakes finden wir eine solche göttliche Investiturszene mit Nike letztmalig auf den Münzvorderseiten.

3) Orodes II. — Göttliche Investitur durch Tyche

Bei den Tetradrachmen von Orodes II. und den nachfolgenden Herrschern ändert sich die Bilddarstellung auf den Münzrückseiten erneut. Typisch ist nun die Darstellung der parthischen Tyche, die rechts von dem auf einem Thron sitzenden König steht und einen Palmwedel oder einen Kranz reicht (s. Abb. 11). Ebenso frappierend wie bei Phraates III. ist die Haltung der mauerbekränzten Tyche vor Orodes II. (S45.1-8) (s. Abb. 10), die diesmal sogar vor dem König kniet und von diesem in einer Geste (Dexiosis) möglicherweise zum Aufstehen gebeten wird. Es ist eine unterwürfige Haltung, die auf den ersten Blick nicht ohne weiteres mit dem Bild einer Göttin in Einklang gebracht werden kann.⁹² Sinisi deutet zurecht

⁹¹ Kaim 2009: 403 ff, Kaim postuliert aufgrund Ihrer Untersuchungen, dass die Investiturszene nicht als zeitlich singuläres Ereignis im Sinne einer Krönung zu sehen ist, sondern eine Art kontinuierlichen Vertrags zwischen der Göttin und dem Herrscher beinhaltet.

⁹² Kaim 2009: 405, ähnlich argumentiert Kaim, die in dieser Szene die Macht des herrschenden Königs beschrieben sieht und die Bilddarstellung nicht als Krönungsszene auffasst.



Abb. 9. Phraatakes und Musa S58.9. Vorderseite Phraatakes, der von 2 Niken, die ihn umfliegen und ihn mit einem Diadem schmücken, Rückseite: Königin Musa, hinter dem Kopf ΘΕΑΣ ΟΥΠΑΝΙΑ[Σ] (die himmlische Göttin)

darauf hin, dass es sich mit der dargestellten Figur um die Personifikation der Stadt Seleukia handle, erkennbar an der Mauerkrone, und führt aus, dass mit dem Bild die Unterwerfung der Stadt Seleukia an den Herrscher gemeint ist. Es ist durchaus denkbar, dass hier Bezug genommen wird auf die Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Orodes II.⁹³ mit seinem Bruder Mithradates III.,⁹⁴ dem Seleukia „die Tore geöffnet“ hatte. Orodes II. „befreite“ die Stadt Seleukia, der Kniefall (s. Abb. 10) der Tyche als Danksagung der Stadt könnte dies deutlich machen.⁹⁵ Auch bei Phraates IV. taucht dieses Bild wieder auf, das die kniende Tyche zeigt, die Münzen stammen aus dem Jahr 29-28 v.Ch. Es ist durchaus wahrscheinlich, dass dieses Bild mit der Revolte von Tiridates zusammenhängt, die von Phraates IV. glücklich niedergeschlagen wurde und der Stadt Seleukia Sicherheit brachte,⁹⁶ die Stadt sich unterwürfig dankbar zeigt, während der König dies akzeptiert, indem er die Göttin zum Aufstehen auffordert.

⁹³ Jakobs 2010: 91.

⁹⁴ Assar 2006a: 87 ff gibt aufgrund einer neuen Zählung Mithradates III. die Bezeichnung IV., da wohl eine zusätzlicher Herrscher, Sohn von Mithradates II. gleichen Namens eingefügt werden muss (Herrschaft 87-80 v.Ch.).

⁹⁵ Richter 2008: 272.

⁹⁶ De Callatad 1994: 47ff; Meyer 2006: 230.



Abb. 10. Orodes II, S45.2, Tyche mit Mauerkrone kniet vor dem König.



Abb 11. Phraates IV. S50.8 Variante. Vorderseite: König mit dynastischer Warze, gepflegtem mittelkurzen Bart, Diadem über in Wellen gelegtem Haar. Rückseite: Tyche mit gebündeltem Haarknauf (Polos) steht vor dem sitzenden König und überreicht einen Kranz/Diadem, in der linken Hand eine Cornucopia. In der unteren Zeile von links: ΖΠΣ (287 Seleucid Era = und der Monat ΑΠΕΛ, die Abkürzung für Apellaios = November).

Die Tetradrachmen von Phraates IV. weisen ein buntes Bild auf, das aufgrund der Untersuchungen von De Callatā⁹⁷ verschiedenen Zeitpunkten zwischen 37-24 v.Ch. zugeordnet werden kann. Die Göttinnen präsentieren sich (bis auf die kniende Göttin) vor dem König stehend, sie überreichen entweder einen Palmenwedel oder ein Diadem /Kranz, und haben unterschiedliche Kopfbedeckungen, mal einen Polos, mal die Mauerkrone. Einige Münzausgaben zeigen die Göttin sogar im Stil von Athena mit einem entsprechenden Helm, und schließlich als mit glattem Haar, in der Hand eine Cornucopia haltend. Auffallend ist in der Analyse der gezeigten Attribute, dass zwei unterschiedliche Figurentypen zu identifizieren sind: eine Tyche mit einer Cornucopia, die nie eine Mauerkrone oder ein Zepter trägt und eine Tyche mit Mauerkrone, die stets ein Zepter hat. Aufgrund der bereits ausgeführten Veränderungen, die man bei Tyche feststellen kann, präsentiert sich Tyche in dieser Phase zweigestaltig: einerseits als personifizierte Tyche (mit Cornucopia) und andererseits als Stadttyche mit Mauerkrone.⁹⁸

4) Göttliche Investitur durch einen Adler

Die Investitur des Königs kann auch durch einen Adler (Falke?)⁹⁹ erfolgen (s. Abb. 12). Solche Investiturdarstellung finden wir nur bei Münzen von Phraates IV. (S52-54). Bereits in den frühen Hochkulturen spielen Raubvögel eine wichtige Rolle als Attribut, Sinnbild oder Personifikation der obersten Gottheiten und Herrscher. Auch in der griechisch-römischen Antike wird Raubvögeln eine besondere Bedeutung beigemessen. So ist der Adler dem Gottvater Zeus / Jupiter zugeordnet, die Göttin Nike wird auch als Adler dargestellt.¹⁰⁰ Auch dieses Bild ist ein synkretistisches Bild, das von Griechen und Parthern gleichermaßen gedeutet werden konnte. Für die Parther ist ein direkter Bezug zum Zoroastrismus über den „königlichen Falken“ Veragna herzustellen oder auch Verethragna,¹⁰¹ der die

⁹⁷ De Callatā 1994.

⁹⁸ Der von Sinisi vorgetragenen Idee, es handele sich um zwei differente religiöse Personalitäten (Sinisi 2008: 241), kann nicht gefolgt werden, die Analyse ergibt vielmehr zwei Entitäten der Göttin Tyche.

⁹⁹ Curtis 2007b: 423. Es könnte der avestische Veragna, der königliche Falke damit gemeint sein, eine Verbindung ist auch mit Verethragna herzustellen.

¹⁰⁰ Curtis (Investiture during the Parthian Dynasty).

¹⁰¹ Zur selben Meinung gelangt auch: Waldmann 1986: 183, „Im Grunde dürfte es sich beim Adler – wohlweislich von der iranischen Religiosität her betrachtet – um die

Gestalt eines Vogels annehmen kann. Über die parthische Zeit hinaus werden solche Adler auch bei einer Reihe von sasanidischen Königen als göttliches Zeichen gefunden, was gleichfalls für einen zoroastrischen Hintergrund spricht.

Dass Niken und Adler gleichgesetzt werden können ist aufgrund der zeitlich parallel auftretenden Symbolik unschwer erkennbar. In dem bisher aufgezeigten Kontext und den sichtbaren synkretistischen Veränderungen bei Phraates III. ist es problemlos vorstellbar, dass die dargestellten Niken/Adler für die Griechen als auch für Parther gleichermaßen religiös deutbar sind.

5) Astrale göttliche Bezüge

Fast zeitgleich mit den Investiturszenen auf der Vorderseite findet man als neues Bildprogramm auf der Vorderseite von Drachmen Darstellungen von Sonne, Sternen und der Mondsichel (s. Tabelle 2, Anhang), die einen astralen göttlichen Bezug herstellen.¹⁰² Für den Zeitraum von ca. 57 v.Ch. bis 51 n.Ch., also für einen Zeitraum von ca. 100 Jahren tritt diese Symbolik der Darstellung der Gestirne auf den Münzvorderseiten auf, verschwindet dann, um einmalig wieder bei Vonones II. (Stern? Sonne?) zu erscheinen. Ein Grund, warum astrale Symbole nur für diese kurze Zeitperiode auf Silbermünzen geprägt werden, bleibt offen. Die Darstellung von Sternen oder Sonne mit sechs oder acht Strahlen hat möglicherweise keine besondere Bedeutung, sondern stellt nur eine künstlerische Variante dar.¹⁰³

Wie schwierig eine Deutung dieser astralen Symbolik ist, zeigen die unterschiedlichen wissenschaftlichen Veröffentlichungen. Mit der Mondsichel könnte die Göttin Nana, die ja die Funktion einer zoroastrischen Mondgöttin übernommen hat gemeint sein, eine Verbindung könnte auch zu dem zoroastrischen Mondgott Mah hergestellt werden, der auf kuschischen Münzen gezeigt wird.¹⁰⁴ Der Stern wird gleichgesetzt mit Venus

Verkörperung des in Verethragna wie in Mithra ausstrahlenden königlichen Aspektes Ahura Mazdas handeln“.

¹⁰² Wenn nur eine Sternfigur zu sehen ist, ist es schwierig zu unterscheiden, ob es sich dabei um die Sonne oder einen Stern handelt, bei der Kombination Mondsichel mit Stern (in der Mondsichel oder unter der Mondsichel) dürfte es sich um einen Stern handeln. Wenn neben einer solchen Kombination noch ein weiterer Stern auf der anderen Kopfseite zu sehen ist, wird es sich um die Sonne handeln.

¹⁰³ Gariboldi 2004: 36.

¹⁰⁴ van't Haaff 2007.



Abb 12. Phraates IV., Phraates IV. Sellwood S54.7.
Ein Adler krönt den König mit einem Diadem
Zusätzlich astrale Symbole vor dem Kopf.

(Göttin der Schönheit, der Liebe), welche Bezüge hat zur griechischen Aphrodite sowie zur mesopotamischen Ishtar, welche wiederum enge Bezüge zur zoroastrischen Göttin Anahita hat.¹⁰⁵ Mit der Sonne könnte unschwer ein Bezug zum zoroastrischen Gott Mithra hergestellt werden, der die Sonne repräsentiert und mit einem Sonnenkranz dargestellt wird. Untersuchungen von Van't Haaff über die elymaische Münzen zeigen in der Elymais andere synkretistische Verbindungen.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Bader 1998: 30.

¹⁰⁶ Vgl van't Haaff 2007. Eine ähnliche Darstellung von astralen Symbolen ist von den Münzen der elymaischen Arsakiden bekannt (ca. 25 v.Ch. bis 228 n.Ch.). Bei den „Uncertain Early Arsacid Kings“ vom Typ 10 ist mit der dargestellten Mondsichel der Mondgott Sin gemeint, die Kugel über dem Anker repräsentiert die Sonnenscheibe, dem Attribut von Shamas, dem mesopotamischen Sonnengott, dem Sohn des Mondgottes. Auch andere Verschmelzungen finden sich in der Götterwelt der Elymais. Zeus und Apollo entsprechen dem Gott Bel, Artemis und Athena finden ihr Pendant in Ishtar und evt. Nanaia. Aus diesen Befunden kann man unschwer ableiten, dass in bestimmten Teilen Parthiens andere synkretische Phänomene zu beobachten sind als zum Beispiel im Kernland oder Osten des Reiches.

Von Bedeutung ist auch die unter Phraatakes geprägte Münze¹⁰⁷ (s. Abb. 13), die auf der Vorderseite vor dem König eine astrale Symbolik und hinter dem Kopf eine krönende Nike darstellt. Offenbar können Nike, Adler und astrale Symbolik parallel gesetzt werden. Die Rückseite der Münze stellt einen wichtigen Bezug zum Zoroastrismus her, da hinter dem sitzenden Bogenschützen ein Feueraltar abgebildet ist.¹⁰⁸ Ebenso gibt es einige Kupfermünzen von Orodes II. und Artabanus II., auf denen Anbeter vor einem Feueraltar stehen.¹⁰⁹ Ferner tragen viele der Münzen, die als Hortfund aus dem nordöstlichen Teil Parthien stammen und von Heidemarie Koch¹¹⁰ untersucht wurden, auf den Vorderseiten neben den Gesichtern Mondsichel und/oder einen Stern, die Münzen werden in die Mitte des 2.JH n.Ch. datiert. Da man im nordöstlichen Teil Parthiens eher von einem zoroastrischen Glaubensumfeld ausgehen kann, ist dies ein weiterer Hinweis, dass hinter den astralen Darstellungen ein zoroastrischer Glaube stehen kann.

6) Musa, die göttliche Königin

Außergewöhnlich in dieser dritten Phase des Parthischen Reiches ist die Darstellung von Musa, der einzigen auf Münzen dargestellten parthischen Königin. Münzen, auf denen Musa allein dargestellt wird, gibt es nicht, stets wird Musa auf einer Seite und ihr Sohn und Gemahl Phraatakes auf der Gegenseite einer Münze dargestellt. Musa war die Ehefrau von König Phraates IV (38-2 v.Ch.), Phraatakes war ihr Sohn. Nach Vergiftung ihres Ehemannes im Jahr 2. V.Ch. heiratete sie ihren eigenen Sohn und wurde damit Königin des Reiches und übernahm die Herrschaft. Bedeutsam in der Betrachtung der religiösen Bezüge ist, dass Musa auf den Münzen den Titel ΘΕΑΣ ΟΥΡΑΝΙΑΣ, die „himmlische Göttin“ führt (s. Abb. 9). Zusätzlich erhält Musa die Investitur durch die Göttin Nike. Durch diese Doppel-Botschaft wird ihr Machtanspruch verdeutlicht, den sie auf den Thron und damit die Herrschaft über die Parther erhebt. Münzen von Phraatakes, auf denen er allein gezeigt wird, zeigen zwar auch seine Investitur durch die Göttin Nike, der Titel ΘΕΟΥ bleibt ihm offensichtlich versagt.

¹⁰⁷ S56.13 und S56.14.

¹⁰⁸ Sellwood 1980: 184.

¹⁰⁹ Curtis 2005: 391.

¹¹⁰ Koch 1990. z.B. Gruppe 5, 7, 12a, 12 b, 12 c, 12 d.



Abb. 13. Phraatakes, (2 v.Ch.-4 n.Ch.), S56.13 Variante, Prägeort Mithradakart, Symbol eines Feuertempel hinter dem Bogenschützen, darüber Mondsichel.¹¹¹

7) Orodes III. (6. n.Ch.) bis Gotarzes II. (bis 51 n.Ch.)

Orodes III., der im Jahr 6 n.Ch. König war, hat auf seinen Münzen keine Darstellungen einer Gottheit. Vonones I. (8-12 n.Ch.) zeigt auf seinen Tetradrachmen und Drachmen eine nach rechts gewandte Nike. Der König, ein Sohn Phraates IV., der von diesem nach Rom verbannt worden war, gelangte 8 n.Ch. auf den Thron. Er war bei der übrigen parthischen Adelsfamilie nicht beliebt, vielleicht weil er eine römische Erziehung erhalten hatte. Seine Münzen sind römisch beeinflusst, die Rückseiten der Münzen zeigen eine nach rechts gewandte Nike,¹¹² was aufgrund der persönlichen Geschichte des Königs verständlich erscheint. Trotzdem ist festzuhalten, dass Nike in der Gesamtbetrachtung dieser III. Phase keine bedeutende Rolle spielt.

Münzen von Artabanus II. (10-38 n.Ch.) zeigen auf den Tetradrachmen die stehende Tyche nach links zum sitzenden König gewandt (S61.1-6), sie hält im linken Arm eine Cornucopia, mit der rechten übergibt sie eine Palme. Sie hat keine Mauerkrone sondern ist durch einen Polos gekennzeichnet (Jahr 12 n.Ch.). Bei dem S62.3 Typ steht Tyche nunmehr links, zwischen ihr und dem König kniet eine Figur. Möglicherweise ist der

¹¹¹ Vgl. Parthia.com: Phraatakes, S56.13.

¹¹² Keller 2010: 631, Sellwood Typ S60.

unterlegene Vonones gemeint. Tyche hat kein Füllhorn mehr, trägt glattes Haar. Ein neues Bild auf den S63 Tetradrachmen zeigt Tyche links vor dem auf einem Pferd reitenden König, sie trägt eine Mauerkrone und überreicht einen Palmenwedel.

Auf den Tetradrachmen von Vardanes I. (40-47 n.Ch.; S64.1-20) steht Tyche wieder rechts vom König, überreicht einen Palmenwedel. Sie trägt eine Cornucopia, das Haar ist glatt, keine Mauerkrone oder Polos. Bei Gotarzes II. (40-51 n.Ch.) wird dieses Bild der Tyche weitergeführt (S65.1-32 und S66.1-3).

III. b) *Geschichtlich-kulturelle Entwicklung des Partherreiches in der III. Phase von Phraates III. bis Vonones II (70 v.Ch. bis ca. 51 n.Ch.)*

Phraates III. wurde aufgrund der Kriege des pontischen Königs Mithradates VI. und Rom in die Kriegsverläufe mit einbezogen, als der dritte mithridatische Krieg (74-63 v.Ch.) ganz Kleinasien in Unruhe brachte. König Tigranes II. (95-55 v.Ch.) von Armenien einigte sich mit dem römischen Feldherrn Pompejus und erhielt die Oberhoheit über die Gordyene, die eigentlich zu Parthien gehörte. Bei nachfolgenden Kämpfen um dieses Gebiet musste sich der parthische König Phraates III. mit Teilverlusten im Grenzbereich geschlagen geben und verlor die Gordyene durch einen Friedensvertrag von 64 v.Ch. Phraates III. wurde von seinen beiden Söhnen, Mithradates III. und Orodes II. getötet.¹¹³

Mit der Herrschaft von Orodes II. begannen erstmals direkte kriegerische Auseinandersetzungen mit dem römischen Weltreich, welches bis dahin das Parthische Reich als unbedeutend und nicht gleichrangig empfunden hatte.¹¹⁴ Im Jahr 53 v.Ch. kam es zu der berühmten Schlacht bei Carrhae, welche zu einer massiven Niederlage der Römer führte. Ca. 20.000 Römer wurden getötet und 10.000 Soldaten gerieten in Gefangenschaft. Diese Niederlage beeinträchtigte nicht nur nachhaltig das römische Selbstverständnis ihrer Weltherrschaft, sondern führte umgekehrt bei den Parthern zu einem neuen Selbstbewusstsein. Auch in weiteren kriegerischen Zusammenstößen mit den Römern behielten die Parther die Oberhand und zeigten Selbstbewusstsein. Nachdem unter Mithradates I. und den nachfolgenden Königen die Expansion des Parthischen Reiches im

¹¹³ Debevoise 1938: 75 f.

¹¹⁴ Landskron 2005: 102.

großen Maße erfolgt und Rom in seine Grenzen verwiesen war, brachte die III. Phase den Parthern eine weitgehende Stabilisierung des Reiches und eine wirtschaftliche Stabilität, insbesondere unter der 28 Jahre dauernden Herrschaft von Artabanus II.

Die Ikonographie der Münzen dieser Zeitperiode spiegelt diesen Wandel wieder, indem ein neues Herrscherbild aufgebaut wird. Orodes II. lässt sich in parthischer Tracht darstellen, erkennbar ist die typische weite Pluderhose auf den Tetradrachmen (s. Abb. 11). Auf Tetradrachmen von Pacorus II. ist der König mit der typisch parthischen Tunika dargestellt. Auch gleichen die Abbildungen der Könige auf den Vorderseiten den Königsbildern auf den Rückseiten, der Bezug zum Gründungskönig Arsaces I. fehlt somit. Ab Orodes II. werden die Könige nicht mehr mit Zeremonialwaffen der Meder und Achämeniden dargestellt, sondern mit realen Waffen aus einer anderen Tradition, nämlich Waffen der Steppenvölker.¹¹⁵ Es sind Dolche, Kurzschwerter und mittellange Schwerter. Die politische Botschaft ist klar: Die Könige demonstrieren neues Selbstbewusstsein als parthische Herrscher, die keine Rücksicht auf andere Völker nehmen müssen, und demonstrieren ihre Macht mit den realen Waffen.

III. c) *Zusammenfassende Beurteilung der dritten Phase in religiöser und historisch kultureller Gesamtsicht*

In der dritten Phase von Phraates III. bis Vonones II. (70 v.Ch bis ca. 51 n.Ch.) präsentiert sich Parthien als Weltmacht. Die erfolgreichen Kriege gegen Rom stärken das Selbstbewusstsein der parthischen Könige. Eine Abwendung vom Hellenismus ist deutlich erkennbar, die parthischen Könige zeigen sich nunmehr in parthischer Kleidung und lassen sich mit realen Waffen abbilden, die aus der Steppe stammen.

Eine parallele Entwicklung geht in religiösen Glaubensinhalten einher. Die Parther wenden sich vom Hellenismus ab, die meisten griechischen Gottheiten werden nicht mehr abgebildet, lediglich Tyche und Nike werden nur noch dargestellt.

Die als persönliche hellenistische Tyche identifizierte Göttin bei der Interregal Issue bis hin zu Mithradates II. erfährt bei Phraates III. einen erheblichen Bedeutungswandel. Sie steht vor dem König und überreicht ihm einen Palmenwedel, sinnbildlich wird die Übergabe der *khvarrah*,

¹¹⁵ Winkelmann 2006: 140.

„der göttlichen Herrlichkeit“ und des „königlichen Glücks“ gezeigt. Die Attribute der Mauerkrone und des Zepters, die die Göttin als Stadttiche erkennen lassen, die „eine Spezialform eine Spezialform der Schicksalsgöttin Tyche“¹¹⁶ ist, mischen sich hier mit den zusätzlichen Elementen, die die Göttin als „parthische Göttin“ identifizieren lassen.

Bei Orodes II. und insbesondere bei Phraates IV. finden wir ebenfalls ausgeprägte synkretistische Bildinhalte bei der Darstellung der Tyche. Die Göttin wird sogar wie Athena mit einem Helm dargestellt. Die Darstellung der Athena signalisiert den „griechischen“ Anteil der Stadttiche, da Athena mit der Darstellung von Ähren im linken Arm bei den frühen städtischen Münzprägungen auf die Fruchtbarkeit der Stadt hinweist.

Der Nachweis synkretistischer Vorgänge im selben Zeitabschnitt unter Antiochos I. (ab 65/64 v.Ch.) in der Kommagene, die griechische Götter mit Gottheiten aus dem zoroastrischen Glauben gleichsetzen (Zeus-Ormasdes und Apollo-Mithra-Helios-Hermes und von Artagnes-Herakles-Ares) lässt es als wahrscheinlich ansehen, dass auch bei den Parthern in diesem Zeitraum synkretistische Vorgänge stattfanden. Die ikonographischen Analysen stützen diese Überlegung. Die Darstellung der Tychefigur mit den Attributen der Athena ist für den stattfindenden Synkretismus ein gutes Beispiel, da auch Athena bei den Griechen die Funktion einer Stadtgöttin wahrnahm.¹¹⁷ Weitere Hinweise sind die neuen Bildprogramme, wobei Investiturdarstellungen der Könige durch Niken oder Adler auf den Münzrevers gezeigt werden. Zeitgleich werden auf den Münzvorderseiten neben dem Kopf des Königs Sonne, Mond oder Sterne dargestellt, sie werden als astrale Gottheiten gedeutet, ein aus parthischer Sicht gesehener Bezug zu zoroastrischen Gottheiten ist durchaus wahrscheinlich und wird durch das Bild eines Feueraltars auf Münzrückseite von Phraatakes (s. Abb. 13) verdeutlicht.

IV. Phase: Vologases I. bis Artabanus IV. (51 n.Ch. bis zum Reichsende)

IV. a) Münzen mit religiösen Bezügen

An religiösen Bezügen dominiert bis zum Ende des Parthischen Reiches sowohl auf Silber- als auch auf Bronzemünzen die Darstellung von Tyche,

¹¹⁶ Meyer 2006: 354.

¹¹⁷ Meyer 2006: 301.

die dem sitzenden König ein Diadem überreicht. Lediglich bei drei Münztypen niedrigen Wertes zwischen 80 bis 216 n.Ch. kommt noch die Göttin Nike vor¹¹⁸, so dass deren Bedeutung verschwindend klein ist.

Tyche wird nun durchgehend mit einer Krone gezeigt (s. Abb. 14), eine Cornucopia fehlt durchgehend, in der Hand hält sie ein Zepter. Sie steht nun grundsätzlich links vom König, während bei allen Königen zuvor die Göttin rechts stand.¹¹⁹



Abb. 14.
Vologases IV, S84.112 —118

Der Typus der Mauerkrone scheint sich im Laufe der Zeit zu ändern, möglicherweise bereits ab Vologases II., spätestens ab Vologases IV. erscheint die Krone nicht mehr wie eine Mauerkrone, sondern dreieckig zipfelig (s. Abb. 14).

Verfolgt man den Gedanken, dass die parthischen Tyche die Übergabe der „God given Glory oder Fortune“ (*khvarrah*) an den König vollzieht¹²⁰, der für das ganze Reich zuständig ist, macht es keinen Sinn, eine nur auf die Stadt (Seleukia) bezogene Göttin zu zeigen. Die Änderung der stadtbezogenen Mauerkrone in eine Krone für das gesamte Reich wäre eine

¹¹⁸ bei Parthamaspatēs S81.3 Chalkous, sowie bei Vologases IV. S84.144 Dichalkous und S84.157 Dichalkous.

¹¹⁹ Lediglich bei Artabanus steht die Göttin schon links (S62.3 u. S63.1).

¹²⁰ Curtis 2007b: 422.

logische Weiterentwicklung.¹²¹ Hierfür spricht auch, dass ab 51 n.Ch. die „parthische Tyche“ als einzige Göttin des gesamten Parthischen Reiches für die nächsten knapp 200 Jahre fungiert.¹²²

IV. b) Geschichtlich-kulturelle Entwicklung des Partherreiches in der IV. Phase von Vologases I. bis Artabanus IV. (51 n.Ch. bis zum Reichsende)

In dieser 4. Phase ab Vologases I. (51-71 n.Ch.) ist deutlich zu merken, dass der wirtschaftliche und politische Anspruch des Parthischen Reiches der Realität zunehmend nicht mehr standhält. Die Auseinandersetzungen mit Rom schwächten das Land. Im Jahr 115 n.Ch. zog der römische Kaiser Trajan gegen die Parther und eroberte die Städte Ktesiphon sowie das gegenüberliegende Seleukia. Zwar konnten die Parther diesen Angriff wieder abwehren und verlorene Gebiete zurückerobern, wurden jedoch nur wenige Jahrzehnte später erneut von den Römern angegriffen. 161 n.Ch. kam es erheblichen Verlusten, als Marc Aurel die Stadt Seleukia am Tigris eroberte und zerstörte. Dura Europos wurde Teil des Römischen Reiches. Im Jahr 197 n.Ch. drang Septimus Severus in die nördlichen Gebiete von Mesopotamien ein und eroberte Seleukia und Babylon.¹²³

Der endgültige Verfall des Parthischen Reiches begann. Der Partherkönig Vologases VI. (208-228 n.Ch) verlor offenbar bald die Kontrolle über den größten Teil des Reiches. Dies war spätestens 216 n.Ch. der Fall, als der römische Kaiser Caracalla in das Partherreich eindrang. Nicht nur die Auseinandersetzungen mit den Römern im Westen, sondern auch Angriffe der Kuschanen im Osten brachten das Partherreich in Bedrängnis. Die Wirtschaftslage in der letzten Phase verschlechterte sich offenbar, so abzulesen an der Herstellung von Münzen mit geringerem Silbergehalt.

Die Ikonographie der Münzen aus dieser Zeit spiegelt ebenfalls die geschilderten Veränderungen wider. Ungefähr seit Ende des ersten

¹²¹ So auch Sinisi, der darauf hinweist, dass ab der Mitte des 1. JH n.Ch. der Wettbewerb zwischen der *polis* und der Herrschaft zu Ende ging (Sinisi 2008: 245); ebenso Meyer 2006: 514, die davon ausgeht, dass es zu Verschmelzungen beider Bild kommt.

¹²² Berücksichtigen muss man andererseits, dass alle Tetradrachmen in Seleukia geprägt sind und ein direkter Bezug zur Stadt weiterhin wirksam sein kann. Dies erklärt trotzdem nicht dass bis auf die erwähnten Ausnahmen kein anderes Bild von Göttinnen auf allen an anderen Orten geprägte Münzen vorhanden ist und eine Verwendung von Tetradrachmen im gesamten Partherreich angenommen werden kann

¹²³ Shore 1993: 78.



Abb. 15a. Vologases VI., S88.19,
Vorderseite: aramäische Schrift hinter
dem Königskopf (= abgekürzter Name
des König Vologases)



Abb 15 b.
Rückseite: obere Zeile aramäische
Schrift darunter nicht lesbares Griechisch

Jahrhunderts n.Ch. verliert sich auf den Silberdrachmen die plastisch genaue Darstellung der Könige. Gesicht, Bärte und Haar sind bei den Drachmen stilisiert (s. Abb. 15a). Auch die Vorderseiten der Tetradrachmen zeigen den Herrscher in eher grober stilisierender Form. Ab Mitte des 2. Jahrhunderts wird die griechische Schrift auf den Münzen z.T. ganz unleserlich, nur noch die grobe äußere Form erinnert an griechische Schrifttypen. Der Königsname wird von Anfang des 2. Jahrhunderts n.Ch. bis zum Ende des Partherreiches¹²⁴ in aramäischer Schrift zusätzlich zur griechisch anmutenden Schrift neben den Königskopf gesetzt (s. Abb. 15b). Die weitere Abwendung vom Hellenismus wird evident, auch wenn auf den Münzen von Artabanus III, Vologases III., Vologases IV., Vologases V. und Vologases VI. noch die griechische Inschrift ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ, der Griechenfreund, erscheint.

IV. c) Zusammenfassende Beurteilung der vierten Phase in religiöser und historisch kultureller Gesamtsicht

Die vierte Phase des Partherreiches ist gekennzeichnet durch zunehmende innere Zerrüttung, Angriffe von Rom im Westen und den Kushanen

¹²⁴ Bei den Königen Mithradates IV. (129-140 n.Ch.), Vologases IV., Vologases V., Vologases VI. und Artabanus V.

im Osten. Die wirtschaftliche Lage wird schlechter, erkennbar an Münzen mit geringem Silberanteil. Die Abwendung vom Hellenismus ist nun evident, aramäische Schriftzeichen werden auf die Münzen geprägt, die griechische aussehende Schrift ist unlesbar.

An religiösen Bezügen dieser 200 jährigen Periode dominiert die Darstellung von Tyche, die dem sitzenden König im Sinne einer Investition ein Diadem überreicht. Andere griechische Götter werden nicht mehr dargestellt,¹²⁵ Investiturszenen mit Adlern bzw. Nike fehlen, ebenso die Darstellung von astralen Bezügen. Die Göttin steht nunmehr links vom sitzenden König, sie trägt eine Krone, die anfänglich noch wie eine Mauerkrone aussieht, im Laufe der Zeit ihre Form verändert und dreieckig zipflig wird. Inwieweit mit dieser Formveränderung die Stadttyche auch eine neue Bedeutung bekommt, möglicherweise die einer Tyche für das ganze parthische Land, muss derzeit Hypothese bleiben. Nicht unwahrscheinlich ist, dass ab Mitte des 1. JH n.Ch. das vorher synkretistische Bild der Parthischen Tyche, das sowohl von den Griechen als auch den Parthern gleichermaßen im jeweiligen Gauben gedeutet werden konnte, sich endgültig zu einer rein parthischen Göttin hin gewandelt hat.

Die Wandlung der hellenistischen Tyche zur parthischen Göttin — Diskussion

In der I. Phase (247-171 v.Ch.) zeigen die Parther keine religiösen Darstellungen, noch tragen die Münzen Hinweise auf griechischen Religioneinfluss. Dies kann als Nachweis dafür angesehen werden, dass die Parther ihrem eigenen Glauben, dem sie zum Zeitpunkt der Gründung ihres Staates hatten, weiter anhängen. Die bildliche Darstellung von eigenen Göttern war den Parthern fremd, eine Übernahme von hellenistisch geprägten Götterbildern auf parthische Münzen erfolgt in den ersten 77 Jahren parthischer Herrschaft nicht.

In der II. Phase (171-70 v.Ch.) übernehmen die Parther nach Eroberung Mesopotamiens ab 141 v.Ch. die seleukidische Münzikonographie, wie sie u. A. auf den Münzen von Demetrios I. und II. zu finden ist. Wie die Ausführungen ergeben, ist die dargestellte Göttin bei den Münzen vom Interregal Typ bis hin zu Mithradates II. als Tyche zu identifizieren, auch

¹²⁵ Lediglich bei drei Münztypen, alle niedrige Werte – Chalkous bzw. Dichalkous — zwischen 80 bis 216 n.Ch. kommt noch die Göttin Nike vor (bei Parthamaspatas S81.3, sowie bei Vologases IV. S84.144 und S84.157),

wenn die Mauerkrone fehlt. Die Zuordnung als Demeter, wie sie z.B. Sellwood aufgrund der fehlenden Mauerkrone gegeben hat, sollte damit zugunsten der Tyche verlassen werden. Zur besseren Unterscheidung macht es Sinn, diese sitzende Tyche, dargestellt mit einer Cornucopia, als hellenistische Tyche zu bezeichnen. Sie ist eine auf das Glück des einzelnen Menschen bezogene Göttin, die schon bei Demetrios I. auf das persönliche Schicksal hinweist. Es liegt nahe, dass die parthischen Könige nach ihrem Sieg über Mesopotamien dieses Bild des persönlichen Glücks problemlos übernehmen konnten und – als politische Botschaft — ihre Machtübernahme mit göttlichem Beistand damit auch an die griechische Bevölkerung signalisieren konnten. Hierfür spricht, dass die Parther sich eng an die seleukidische Münzprägung halten und keine wesentlichen Unterschiede fassbar sind. Tyche wird in fast gleicher Weise wie bei Demetrios I. dargestellt und das Bild erinnert direkt an Zeus Nikephoros, da eine kleine Nike der sitzenden Tyche einen Kranz überreicht.

Eine solche Bildübernahme von den Seleukiden währt allerdings nicht viel länger als 20 Jahre, wenn man aufgrund des jugendlichen Portraits Mithradates II. davon ausgeht, dass er die Tetradrachmen (S23.1-2) mit der sitzenden Tyche in der Anfangszeit seiner Herrschaft bis ca. 120 v.Ch. hat prägen lassen. Entscheidend ist nun, dass in der Folge Mithradates II. diese Darstellung der hellenistischen Tyche verlässt und weder er noch nachfolgende Könige für die nächsten 50 Jahre auf Tetradrachmen diese Göttin zeigen. Nur noch auf niedrigwertigen Münzen (z.B. Chalkous) werden gelegentlich griechische Gottheiten geprägt. Erst Phraates III. bringt ein neues Bild einer Tyche.

Durch diesen zeitlichen Verlauf und die im Folgenden näher erläuterten Veränderungen des Tychebildes kann man folgern, dass mit der Darstellung der im hellenistischen Stil dargestellten sitzenden Tyche in den ersten 20 Jahren ab 141 v.Ch. die Übernahme der Göttin als hellenistische Tyche erfolgte und politische Gründe zu vermuten sind. Hierfür spricht besonders die Verwendung von Tetradrachmen, die auch durch ihre Inschriften politische Botschaften vermitteln.¹²⁶ Anhand der Analysen erscheint es unwahrscheinlich, dass die Parther in der hellenistischen Tyche eine eigene, parthische Göttin gesehen haben.

¹²⁶ Vgl die Ausführungen von Dąbrowa 2008, der auf die politischen Absichten in der Münzprägung hingewiesen hat.

Die III. Phase ab Phraates III. (ab 70 v.Ch.) geht mit einem völlig neuen Bild der Tyche in ihrer Beziehung zum König einher. Der König hat nunmehr den Thronessel eingenommen, den vorher die Gottheiten Zeus oder Tyche besetzt hatten (und symbolhaft diese vom Thron gestoßen). Tyche steht hinter dem König und überreicht ihm als Zeichen der Übergabe göttlicher Macht ein Diadem.¹²⁷ Deutlicher hätten die Parther ihre Sichtweise von der Übergabe des göttlichen Glücks und Herrlichkeit (*khvarrah*) an den König nicht darstellen können.

Tyche ist nun mit dieser neuen Funktion eine parthische Tyche geworden. Bei Phraates III. präsentiert sich die Göttin mit einer Mauerkrone, sie kann daher als Stadtttyche identifiziert werden. Die Wandlung von Tyche zu einer Stadtttyche nach einer 50 jährigen Phase, in der Tyche auf parthischen Münzen fehlt, lässt vermuten, dass die hellenistische Idee, die hinter einer Stadtttyche steht, nämlich das Wohlergehen einer Stadt, sich verbunden hat mit Vorstellungen, die die Parther aus ihrer eigenen Glaubenswelt heraus kannten. Wie aufgezeigt wird, ist die Stadtttyche eine Sonderform der persönlichen Tyche und geht dieser zeitlich voraus. Mit der inhaltlichen Änderung einer persönlichen Tyche zu einer Stadtttyche kann eine Entwicklung aufgezeigt werden, die sich widerspruchsfrei in der Ikonografie der parthischen Münzen wiederfindet.

Die Variabilität der Darstellung verschiedener Tycheformen bei Orodes II. und insbesondere bei Phraates IV.¹²⁸ lässt allerdings erkennen, dass die zwei Bilder der Tyche — persönliche Göttin und Stadtttyche — in diesem Zeitraum nebeneinander bestehen konnten. Sogar der Aspekt der griechischen Athena¹²⁹ mit Helm kann in die nunmehr fassbare synkretistisch verlaufende Entwicklung der „parthischen Tyche“ einbezogen werden und erschließt sich sinnhaft.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Vgl. Soudavar: 26 (Looking through the two eyes of the world). Das Diadem wurde von den Parthern als hellenistisches Kopfbedeckung und Machtsymbol übernommen, machte aber (spätestens) bei den Sasaniden eine Wandlung durch zur *dastār*, der Bekrönung sasanidischer Könige.

¹²⁸ Vgl. die Untersuchungen von De Callataf 1994 mit Datierung der verschiedenen Ausgaben.

¹²⁹ Meyer 2006: 243. Auch Athena oder Artemis konnte die Funktion einer Stadtgöttin übernehmen.

¹³⁰ Meyer 2006: 241. Meyer schreibt zu der Entwicklung der Tyche von Antiochia im übrigen Vorderen Orient: „Die Figur mit Mauerkrone (für die Stadt) wurden verschiedene Attribute gegeben, die kumuliert verwendet werden konnten und in ihrer Kombination

Die kniende Tyche, die sowohl bei Orodes II. (vermutlich vor 40/39 v.Ch. geprägt) gezeigt wird und auch Tetradrachmen von Phraates IV. (29/28 v.Ch.) wieder auftaucht, kann mit Eroberungen bzw. Befreiung der Stadt Seleukia verbunden werden, gleichzeitig stellt das Bild symbolhaft den Dank der Stadt für das Wohlergehen dar. So wird auch nachvollziehbar, dass Tyche — als Idee des Wohlergehens der Stadt — sich dankbar vor dem König niederknien kann.

Die in der III. Phase nachweisbare Abwendung der Parther vom Hellenismus und Einführung einer parthischen Tyche geht parallel mit einer Abkehr von den griechischen Göttern einher, bei der bereits ab 90 v.Ch. Griechische Götter auf Silbermünzen (Zeus, Apollo, Artemis, Athena: s. Tabl. 1) nicht mehr dargestellt werden. Damit kann zumindest ein indirekter Beweis erbracht werden, dass die Parther sich zwar weiter der hellenistischen Bildgebung bedienten, nun aber tatsächlich mit der dargestellten Göttin ihren eigenen parthischen Glauben verbanden. Die Parther entwickelten somit ab ca. 70 v.Ch. auf den Münzen ein eigenes religiöses Bild, das deutliche synkretistische Züge aufweist.¹³¹

Eine Unterstützung findet diese Aussage darin, dass in der Kommagene unter Antiochos I. Theos (69-36 v.Ch.) – und damit zeitgleich – konkrete Hinweise auf einen Synkretismus zwischen hellenistischem und zoroastrischen Glauben nachgewiesen werden können und in der Zwischenzeit u. A. von Waldmann¹³² gut untersucht sind. In der ersten Phase der Regierungszeit von Antiochos I. findet man eine Orientierung an der seleukidischen Tradition und an dem armenischen Herrscherkult, in dem die Verehrung der griechischen Götter Zeus, Apollon und Artemis dominiert. In der zweiten Phase werden die Götter mit griechisch-persischem Doppelnamen versehen.¹³³ So lautet eine Inschrift auf dem Nimrud Dagh Hierothesion: „Ich habe diese göttlichen Bilder von Zeus-Ormasdes und Apollo-Mithra-Helios-Hermes und von Artagnes-Herakles-Ares aufgestellt...“¹³⁴

besagten, dass es der Stadt gut ging. Auch das Füllhorn war für diesen Zweck eingesetzt worden, erstmals im 2.JH v.Ch. (im Arm einer Gewandfigur mit Mauerkrone)“.

¹³¹ Trotz dieser Hinweise aus die Entstehung eines Synkretismus zu dieser Zeit fehlen allerdings konkrete Hinweise, welche der möglicherweise infrage kommenden parthischen/zoroastrischen Göttinnen damit gemeint sein können.

¹³² Waldmann 1996: 209 ff.

¹³³ Jacobs 2005: 137.

¹³⁴ Curtis 2007:15.



Abb. 16. Antiochus und Herakles-Verethragna, Nemrud Dagh.

Ein Gleichsetzung von Verethragena und Herakles wird auch in der Inschrift der Plastik von Antiochus I., König von Kommagene (69-34 v. Ch.).¹³⁵ gemacht, die ebenfalls in Nemrud Dagh gefunden wurde. Mit diesem Wechsel, der um 65/64 n.Ch. angesetzt wird,¹³⁶ findet also eine Veränderung hin zum griechisch-persischen Religionssynkretismus statt. Mit den Parthern bestanden in dieser Zeitphase freundschaftliche und verwandtschaftliche Beziehungen, da Antiochus I. seine Tochter Laodike dem parthischen König der Könige Orodes II. (Regierungszeit 58/57 bis 38/37 v.Ch.) zur Frau gab und auch 38 v.Ch. den Parthern Schutz vor Angriffen des römischen Feldherrn Marc Antonius gewährte. Viele Hinweise sprechen also dafür, dass in diesem Zeitraum auch in Parthien ähnliche Veränderungen hin zum Religionssynkretismus stattgefunden haben.

Wie nachgewiesen wurde, findet man in der III. Zeitphase zwischen 70 v.Ch. und ca. 51.n Ch. eine weitere Reihe von Änderungen der religiösen Glaubensdarstellungen, so Investituren durch Nike, Tyche, aber auch

¹³⁵ Ghirshman 1962: 57.

¹³⁶ Winkelmann 2009.

Darstellungen von Adlern als göttliches Symbol oder astrale göttliche Bezüge. Hierin offenbart sich ebenfalls bildlich fassbar eine Phase des Synkretismus zwischen einer hellenistischen Darstellungsweise und zoroastrischen Glaubensformen. Das Bild der Investitur- sei es durch eine Nike, einen Vogel oder eine astrale Symbolik – kann unschwer aus der zoroastrischen Tradition erklärt werden. Dargestellt wird die Übergabe der *khvarrah* — „der göttlichen Herrlichkeit“ und des „königlichen Glücks“, an den legitimen Herrscher der Parther durch die *Yazatas* (göttliche Wesen),¹³⁷ auf die weiter unten näher eingegangen werden soll.

In der IV. Phase wird auf den Münzen nur noch die parthische Tyche dargestellt, sie ist die alleinbeherrschende Göttin. Die Cornucopia fehlt, sie trägt eine Krone, die anfänglich noch wie eine Mauerkrone aussieht, dann aber ihre Form verändert und dreieckig zipfelig wirkt. Es ist nicht unwahrscheinlich, dass ab dieser Phase die Göttin ihre synkretistischen Züge weitgehend verloren hat und nur noch als parthisch-zoroastrische Göttin fungiert.

Mit der Einteilung in vier Phasen und dem Nachweis einer parallel verlaufenden Entwicklung in politischer, kultureller und religiöser Hinsicht, kann festgestellt werden, dass sich die Parther letztlich nie von ihrem eigenen Glauben getrennt haben und dem iranisch-zoroastrischem Glauben, in welcher Form auch immer, anhängen. Ein weiterer wichtiger Beweis hierzu ist die aus dem 2.JH n.Ch. eindeutig im hellenistischen Kunststil geschaffene Plastik von Herakles,¹³⁸ die 1984 in Seleukia gefunden wurde und auf der sich eine der selten Inschriften befindet, die sowohl in Griechisch als auch in Parthisch verfasst ist.¹³⁹ In griechischer Sprache wird Bezug genommen auf Herakles, in parthischer Sprache wird die dargestellte Figur als Gott Verethragna bezeichnet, einem parthisch-zoroastrischen Gott. Noch deutlicher wird diese Doppeldeutung der Plastik, wenn man im griechischen Text liest, dass die Statue dem Apollo-Tempel geweiht ist, während in der parthischen Sprache diese Skulptur einem ganz anderen Tempel geweiht wird, dem Tempel in Tirya, der augenscheinlich ebenfalls in Seleukia lag.¹⁴⁰ Die Inschrift auf der Bronzeplastik besagt, dass Vologases IV. diese Statue als eine Trophäe nach Seleukia brachte, nachdem er

¹³⁷ Curtis 2007: 422 ff.

¹³⁸ Korn 2006: 75.

¹³⁹ Potter 1991: 277 ff. Die Inschrift auf der Bronzeplastik besagt, dass Vologases IV. diese Statue als eine Trophäe nach Seleukia brachte, nachdem er Meherdates (Mithradates), den König der Charakene, 150/151 n.Ch. besiegt hatte.

¹⁴⁰ Invernizzi 2005: 75.

Meherdates (Mithradates), den König der Charakene, 150/151 n.Ch. besiegt hatte.¹⁴¹

Einen seltenen Hinweis auf Adaptationsvorgänge bei der Göttin Tyche hin zur „parthischen Tyche“ finden wir möglicherweise in einem kleinen Terrakottarelief, das vermutlich die Göttin Tyche, erkennbar an der Mauerkrone, zeigt. Allerdings ist nicht sicher zu erkennen, was die Göttin in der linken Hand hält. Anders als auf den Münzen ist hier die Göttin in ein vermutlich parthisches Gewand gekleidet (s. Abb. 17)¹⁴² und präsentiert sich in einer frontalen Haltung mit erhobener rechter Hand, einer Haltung, die wir auch von anderen parthischen Darstellungen kennen.

Wenngleich die vorgestellten Untersuchungen ab der III. Phase einen Synkretismus wahrscheinlich machen und aus parthischer Sicht mit den dargestellten Göttern parthische Gottheiten verbunden sind, verbleibt die Frage, welche parthische Göttin mit der parthischen Tyche gemeint ist. In den Yashts, die Teil der Avesta sind und die Hymnen an alt-iranische Gottheiten enthalten, wird beschrieben, dass die Yazatas — göttliche Wesen — die Aufgabe haben, nur dem rechtmäßigen und legitimen Herrscher die göttlich gegebene königliche Würde und das Glück zu überbringen.¹⁴³

Nach diesen Hymnen ist die Göttin Ardivi Sura Anahita¹⁴⁴ verbunden mit dem königlichen Glück, sie ist die „Verehrungswürdige“ Göttin aller Gewässer, und gleichzeitig die Vergöttlichung des „Weltflusses“, der den kosmischen Ozean speist. Anahita ist die Herrin der Herde und Höfe, Göttin der Fruchtbarkeit, des Wassers und der Pflanzen. Sie wird als Quelle des Lebens angesehen¹⁴⁵ und ist Göttin der Heilkunst.¹⁴⁶ Bereits Artaxerxes II. (ca. 404 bis 363 v.Ch.) hatte dieser iranischen Göttin Altäre in Baktra, Ekbatana, Susa, Persepolis und Babylon aufstellen lassen.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴¹ Zeitlich passt sich dieser nachweisbare Synkretismus aus dem Jahr 151 n.Ch. gut in die nachgewiesene 4.Phase ein, in der eine Abkehr von griechischen Göttern evident ist.

¹⁴² Mathiesen 1992: 219. Rostovtzeff interpretiert bei der Göttin einen Graeco-Babylonischen Stil, und vermutet, dass die männliche Figur später hinzugefügt worden sei. Hiergegen spricht die typisch parthische Haltung der Göttin mit erhobener rechter Hand, der Mauerkrone und die artverwandte Darstellung des Faltenwurfes des Kleides im Vergleich zum parthisch gekleideten Mann.

¹⁴³ Curtis 2007: 422 ff. Anahita wird in Yasht V beschrieben, Ashi in Yasht XVII; Die Yasht, die die verschiedenen Hymnen für individuelle Götter enthalten, datieren aus Vorzoroastrischer Zeit.

¹⁴⁴ Jakobs in: *Encyclopädia Iranica*.

¹⁴⁵ Curtis 1994: 19.

¹⁴⁶ Klose 2008: 54.

¹⁴⁷ Fehr 1990: 87.

Abb. 17. ¹⁴⁸

Terrakottatafel: Eine Göttin steht mit erhobener rechter Hand vor einer Ädikula, einem kleinen Tempel, die aus Säulen mit einem Abschluss-Kapitell und aufgesetztem Rundbogen besteht, sie trägt eine „Mauerkrone, die typisch für Tyche ist. Mit der linken Hand hält sie eine Art von Stola, unklar ist, was sie sonst noch in der linken Hand hält.

Sie trägt parthische beeinflusste Kleidung, die sich vom strengen herunterfallenden Gewand der „parthischen Tyche“ auf den Münzen deutlich unterscheidet. Die rechte Hand ist erhoben und nach vorne geöffnet, eine typische Haltung die wir von anderen parthischen Darstellungen kennen. Neben ihr, ebenfalls in Frontalstellung ein Parther im typischen parthischen Hosenanzug, der in weiten Falten gestaltet ist. Er trägt einen Oberlippenbart und einen kurzen Kinnbart, das Haar ist in Wellen gelegt. An der linken Seite trägt er ein Kurzschwert, was auf eine Zeit nach der 1. Hälfte des 1.JH n.Ch.

hindeutet.¹⁴⁹ Größe: H 13 cm, B 12 cm

¹⁴⁸ Ausstellung Museum des Iran Museum in Rade / beim Schloss Reinbek, 2010: Die Iraner in Ost und West Leiter: G. Gropp (Kopie der eines mit einem antiken Model hergestellten Reliefs) Berlin, ehemals Staatliche Museen; vgl. das Foto bei: Ghirshman 1962: 107.

¹⁴⁹ Winkelmann 2006: 145ff. und in: Eurasisches in Hatra: 37.

Auch die Göttin Ashi ist für das königliche Glück zuständig. Sie ist die Tochter von Ahura Mazda und wird als „Glück in körperlicher Form“¹⁵⁰ beschrieben. In kuschischer Zeit wird sie zu Ardokhsho,¹⁵¹ der Göttin des Glücks und wird auf den Münzen mit einem Füllhorn dargestellt,¹⁵² das für Überfluss und Fülle stand.¹⁵³ Die Kleidung, in der die Göttin sich repräsentiert, entspricht vom Typus und auch von der Haltung her, wie das Gewand um die Hüften gewickelt und gehalten wird, den Abbildungen der Göttin Tyche auf den parthischen Münzen besonders der letzten 2 Jahrhunderte.¹⁵⁴ Neben den Kennzeichen der griechischen Göttin Tyche¹⁵⁵ vereinigt sie auch die der römischen Göttin Fortuna und zeigt Wesensverwandtschaft mit der zoroastrischen Göttin Anahita.¹⁵⁶ Durch Vergleiche mit indischen Münzen kann auch eine Verbindung zwischen Ardokhsho und der indischen Göttin Lakshmi hergestellt werden.¹⁵⁷

Neben Anahita und Ashi, die als zoroastrische Göttinnen für die parthische Tyche infrage kommen, wird ferner die Göttin Nana diskutiert.¹⁵⁸ Es handelt sich bei Nana¹⁵⁹ ursprünglich um die sumerische Göttin Nanaia, der Tochter des Mondgotts Anu, die im Zeitraum von ca. 2500 bis 1500 v.Ch. bis nach Baktrien gelangte,¹⁶⁰ dort akkulturiert wurde und sogar über 2000 Jahre hinweg ihren Namen behielt, wie Inschriften auf Münzen des Kuschanreiches zeigen. Wie in der vorliegenden Arbeit nachgewiesen wurde, ist es sehr unwahrscheinlich, dass mit der bärtigen Göttin bei Münzen von Phraates II. Nana gemeint ist, und eine Akkulturation dieser Göttin nach Eroberung Mesopotamiens als parthische Göttin stattgefunden hat.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁰ Curtis 2007: 423.

¹⁵¹ Weber 2010: 127.

¹⁵² Curtis 2007: 425.

¹⁵³ Lerner 1999: 266.

¹⁵⁴ Lerner 1999: 276.

¹⁵⁵ Weber 2010: 127.

¹⁵⁶ Alram 2004: 57.

¹⁵⁷ Brown 1999: 37.

¹⁵⁸ Sinisi 2008.

¹⁵⁹ Weber 2010: 160 spricht von Nanai.

¹⁶⁰ Potts 2001: 23-35.

¹⁶¹ In parthischer Zeit wird ein ihr geweihter Tempel auf einem Ostrakon aus Nisa erwähnt und Nana findet sich auch in parthischen Namensgebungen wieder. Es darf jedoch nicht vergessen werden, dass die Parther Religionsfreiheit gewährten, und ein Hinweis auf einen Tempel der Nanaja keinen Bezug zur eigenen Religion gehabt haben muss. Auch die Tatsache, dass Mithradates I. im Jahr 139 v.Ch. die Tempel der Athene und der Artemis

Bei dem heutigen Wissensstand verbirgt sich also am ehesten Anahita oder Ashi hinter der parthischen Tyche, eine Klärung gibt es bislang nicht.¹⁶² Wenig zweifelhaft ist jedoch ein iranisch-zoroastrischer Religionshintergrund¹⁶³ der Parther, in dessen Umfeld es weiteren Forschungen und neuen archäologischen Funden vorbehalten sein wird, eine endgültigere Klärung zum Wesen dieser parthisch-zoroastrischen Göttin herbeizuführen.

Wenngleich eine nähere Bestimmung, welche iranische Göttin sich hinter Tyche verbirgt, derzeit nicht möglich ist, so lässt sich möglicherweise etwas mehr über die Funktion aussagen. Da die parthische Tyche als einzige Göttin des gesamten Reiches über 200 Jahre hinweg fungiert, liegt der Gedanke nahe, dass Tyche nicht nur für die Stadt Seleukia, sondern in logischer Konsequenz auch für das gesamte Reich zuständig ist. Hier ist wiederum eine direkte Parallele zu Tyche – der allnährende Landesgöttin Kommagene – zu ziehen. Antiochus sagt von der Tyche in der Inschrift der Reliefstele von Samosata,¹⁶⁴ sinngemäß: „eine neue Tyche habe ich an der alten Ehre der großen Götter Anteil nehmen lassen, indem ich dabei in gerechter Weise das Vorbild der göttlichen Fürsorge nachahmte, die mir bei den Kämpfen meiner Königsherrschaft zu wiederholten Male als wohlwollende Helferin wirksam zur Seite getreten ist“.¹⁶⁵ Die Attribute der Göttin der Kommagene sind Blumen und Früchte, die sie auf dem Kopf trägt, Zeichen der Fülle, wie sie bei der parthischen Tyche bildhaft mit der Cornucopia dargestellt wird.

In der Figur der Kommagene finden wir also zwei unterschiedliche Wesenszüge. Das Bild der göttlichen Fürsorge entspricht dem Gottesgnadentum,¹⁶⁶ und kann durchaus gleichgesetzt werden mit der *khvarrah* „der göttlichen Herrlichkeit“ und des „königlichen Glücks“, das dem König zuteil wird.¹⁶⁷ Andererseits hat die Göttin Tyche die Aufgabe der allnährenden Landesgöttin der Kommagene.

(-Nanaja) in der Elymais erfolgreich plünderte (in: Amboß 2003: 249, Strabon XVI 1,18) spricht gegen Akkulturationsvorgänge mit Nanaja und Tyche.

¹⁶² Yarshater 1983: 873.

¹⁶³ Curtis 2007: 413.

¹⁶⁴ Waldmann 1973: 21.

¹⁶⁵ Ebenso wie Waldmann 1973: 21 gibt dies Günter 2003: 230 in freierer Übersetzung an.

¹⁶⁶ Kreikenbom 2008: 37.

¹⁶⁷ Soudavar 2003: 121-123.



Abb. 18. Tyche der Kommagene, Nemrud Dagh.

Bezogen auf das Parthische Reich kann man daher mutmaßen, dass auch die parthische Tyche diese Doppelfunktion hat: sie sorgt einerseits für die Übergabe der *khvarrah* an den legitimen parthischen König der Könige, andererseits ist sie für das Wohlergehen des gesamten parthischen Staates zuständig.¹⁶⁸

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Hinweis: Sellwood Typen werden mit: S + folgender Nummer gekennzeichnet. Verwandt wird die Klassifizierung, die Sellwood benutzt (Sellwood, *The Coinage of Parthia*, 2. Ausgabe). Im Artikel als auch den anhängenden Tabellen wird zusätzlich die neue Einteilung von Assar zum Vergleich herangezogen.

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Tabelle 1.

Darstellung von Gottheiten auf parthischen Tetradrachmen und Drachmen
in ihrem Hauptvorkommen mit Ausnahme der Göttin Tyche (hierzu s. Text)

× = Silbermünzen (Tetradrachme / Drachme)

Zeit	Herrscher	Type	Nike	Athena	Herakles	Zeus	Apollo	Artemis
247-211 v.Ch.	Arsaces I	1+2+3+4						
211-191 v.Ch.	Arsaces II	5+6						
191–176 v.Ch.	Phriapatius	xxx						
176-171 v.Ch.	Phraates I	xxx						
171-138 v.Ch.	Mithradates I	7+8+ 9-13	×		×	×	×	
138-127 v.Ch.	Phraates II	14-17	×				×	
127-125 v.Ch.	Interregnum	18						
127-124 v.Ch.	Artabanus I	19-22	×		×			
123-88 v.Ch.	Mithradates II	24-29	×	×			×	×
95-90 v.Ch.	Gotarzes I	33	×				×	
90-80 v.Ch.	Orodes I	31	×					
ca. 80 v.Ch.	Unknown King I	32						
80-70 v.Ch.	Unknown King (II)	30	×					
77-70 v.Ch.	Sinatrauces	34						
70-57 v.Ch.	Phraates III	38-39						

Tabelle 2.
Verteilung von Sonne-Stern-Mond Symbolen
auf parthischen Silbermünzen (× = Silbermünzen)

Zeit	Herrscher	Type	Stern auf der Vorderseite	Stern auf der Rückseite	Mondsichel auf der Vorderseite	Mondsichel auf der Rückseite	Stern u. Mondsichel-Vorderseite	Stern u. Mondsichel-Rückseite
70-57 v.ch.	Phraates III.							
57-54 v.Ch.	Mithradates III.	40-41	×		×		×	
57-38 v.Ch.	Orodes II.	42-48	×	×	×	×	×	×
39 v.Ch.	Pacorus I.	49			×			
29-26 v.Ch.	Tiridates I.	55						
38-2 v.Ch..	Phraates IV.	50-54	×	×	×	×	×	×
2 v.Ch.-.4 n.Ch.	Phraatakes + Queen Musa	56-58	×			×	×	×
6 n.Ch.	Orodes III.	59						
8-12 n.Ch.	Vonones I.	60						
6 n.Ch.	Orodes III.	59						
51 n.Ch	Vonones II.	67	×					
10-38 n.Ch.	Artabanus II.	61-63						
40-51 n.Ch.	Gotarzes	65	×		×		×	
Ca 51 n.Ch.	Vonones II	65	×					
51-78 n.Ch.	Vologases I	68-71						

AND MAN CREATED GOD? KINGS, PRIESTS AND GODS ON SASANIAN INVESTITURE RELIEFS

BY

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Abstract: An inscription on the Naqsh-i Rostam I rock relief identifies the two protagonists in the investiture scene as Ardashir I and Ahura Mazda. All investing authorities on the royal Sasanian reliefs are therefore commonly identified as Ahura Mazda. In view of conflicting historic information and unexplained variations in the iconography of “Ahura Mazda”, a re-interpretation of the investiture reliefs is made. The inscription on Ahura Mazda’s horse at Naqsh-i Rostam appears to have been added at the end of Ardashir’s reign or early in Shapur I’s reign and the earliest reliefs are now considered to depict an investiture by a priest, instead of by Ahura Mazda. Once the inscription had been added to the Naqsh-i Rostam I rock relief, it changed from an investiture by a priest to one by a god, Ahura Mazda. Iconographic details that conflicted with this transformation (such as the barsum, attendant and possibly the “royal” tamga) were left out of the divine image in later representations of the investiture on horseback. The late Sasanian Taq-i Bustan III investiture on foot, up to now considered to be the investiture of Khusrow II by Ahura Mazda and Anahita, is equally interpreted as an investiture by clergy, in this case by representatives of the cults of these two gods, rather than by the gods themselves.

Keywords: Sasanian, investiture, Ardashir I, rock reliefs, Ahura Mazda, Anahita, barsum.

The investiture of Ardashir I at Naqsh-i Rostam I bears trilingual inscriptions on the horses that identify the protagonists as Ardashir I (on the left) and Ahura Mazda (on the right) (Pl. 2, 7-8). Ardashir’s horse tramples on

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the defeated Parthian king (generally identified as such because of the tamga on his headdress, identical to Ardashir's opponent at the Firuzabad joust relief, see Pl. 12, combined with the diadem and the long crimped ties) while Ahura Mazda's horse treads on a creature that is generally accepted to represent the evil Ahriman (wearing a diadem with entwined serpents and having feet in the shape of snakes) (Pl. 9). Behind Ardashir stands his page with a fly whisk. The 6.75 by 4.28 m large relief was mentioned and illustrated by many early travellers and explorers passing through Naqsh-e Rostam and has been commented on by archaeologists and art historians (Sarre & Herzfeld 1910: 67-71, fig. 24-26, Pl. V; Hinz 1969: 126-134, Pl. 60-68; Schmidt 1970: 125, Pl. 81-82). Although the significance of the investiture scene was not always understood, there could be no doubt about the identity of the figures. The trilingual inscription, which gave the 18th century scholar de Sacy the means to decipher the Pehlevi on Sasanian coins (de Sacy 1743), making him "the father of Sasanian numismatics" (Mordtmann 1880: 14), equated the Iranian god in the Greek version with the supreme *Zeus* (Back 1978: 282 ANRm-b).

Since the basic lay-out of the scene — a ritual on horseback involving a ring with ties — was repeated in the rock reliefs of Shapur I at Naqsh-e Rostam IV (Pl. 2), of Shapur I at Bishapur I (Pl. 3 top) and Bahram I at Bishapur V (Pl. 3 bottom), the identity of the investing figures on these reliefs was also considered to be self-evident. The presence of a mural crown, the fact that he was unarmed and held a ring, were all elements that were used to define Ahura Mazda on other post-Ardashir I reliefs such as Taq-e Bostan I (relief of Ardashir II, see Overlaet 2012) and Taq-e Bostan III (Pl. 4). Ardashir I's reliefs at Firuzabad and Naqsh-e Rostam also depicted an investiture scene: a ritual with a beribboned ring that took place between the king and an unarmed man with a mural crown (Naqsh-e Rostam) and/or high headdress (Firuzabad) holding a barsam (Pl. 1). Looking at all these similarities, one could but conclude that also these reliefs showed the Sasanian king being invested by Ahura Mazda. The subject sparked a series of scholarly papers on the investiture, its significance and the dating of the individual reliefs (for a survey with extensive references, see Ghirshman 1975; Vanden Berghe 1988; von Gall 1990). The idea of the "divine investiture ring" had a number of consequences for the interpretation of other reliefs as well. Narseh's representation at Naqsh-e Rostam VIII (Fig. 1) came to be seen as a divine investiture, rather than as it should be, a family scene with his wife and heir (first correctly identified as such by Mordtmann 1880: 41-43). The woman simply had to be a goddess and was



Fig. 1. King Narseh with his wife, sometimes interpreted as Anahita, Naqsh-e Rostam VIII (after Herrmann & Howell 1977: fig. 2).

consequently identified by Friedrich Sarre as Anahita (Sarre & Herzfeld 1910, 84-88, Taf. IX). Sarre's identification became, as Shahbazi put it (who convincingly disproved this identification), "*a cornerstone of Sasanian iconography — indeed, history*" (Shahbazi 1983: 255). This simplification of every "beribboned ring scene" to a divine investiture has in recent years been rightly contested. Various authors pointed out the confusion that exists (von Gall 1990; Kaim 2009). Rings with ribbons, others without ribbons and sometimes even diadems are described in literature as "investiture rings". The ring can have various significances, among other things, it may also be a token of a *mithra*, a contract, covenant or pledge of allegiance (Kaim 2009: 407-408).

The short sentence that identified Ahura Mazda had an enormous influence on our ideas about the Sasanian iconography. The uniform interpretation of the "beribboned ring" scenes somewhat conveniently implied that we have a full understanding of the reliefs. Yet, when one looks at the iconographic details of the investiture scenes, there remain many differences that were left unexplained. In the present paper we will concentrate

on the eight Sasanian “investiture” reliefs with a male investing figure who is generally interpreted as Ahura Mazda:

Ardashir I	: Firuzabad II
	: Naqsh-i Radjab III
	: Naqsh-i Rustam I
Shapur I	: Naqsh-i Radjab IV
	: Bishapur I
Bahram I	
(usurped by Narseh)	: Bishapur V
Ardashir II	: Taq-i Bustan I
Khusrow II	: Taq-i Bustan III

If one concentrates on the differences between these eight Sasanian investiture scenes, rather than on the similarities as has been done over the last century or so, it becomes obvious that a more complex and versatile interpretation is needed and that political and religious changes that took place in the empire must somehow be embedded in these representations.

Before suggesting an alternative interpretation of the investiture scenes, let us survey the main differences that need to be explained:

The characteristics and regalia of Ahura Mazda

There may have been a reluctance to depict Ahura Mazda in human form in Sasanian Iran since we have hardly any representations. Franz Grenet, referring to 18.1-5 of the *Dādestān ī dēnīg*, pointed out in his discussion on Mithra that Ahura Mazda was visible only through the powers of wisdom (Grenet 2006). This would mean that there may have been a *de facto* ban on the human representation of Ahura Mazda, something which would not be surprising since, apart from the rock reliefs, there are indeed no images of this god known. However, the *Dādestān ī dēnīg* was compiled in the 9th century and may thus also reflect ideas that are not necessarily fully applicable to the early Sasanian period when many of the official religious concepts and rituals were still in a phase of formation. The attitude towards divine representations may have changed considerably throughout the period. The question 18 of the *Dādestān ī dēnīg* that is referred to by Grenet, specifically asks whether it is possible for the soul, once it has entered the spiritual world, to see Ohrmazd and his evil counterpart Ahriman. The answer to it is clear; neither Ahriman nor Ahura

Mazda have a material existence and v. 18.3 states “*Ohrmazd (is) also a spirit among spiritual beings (and is) worthy of praise both in the material and spiritual worlds. His form is not completely visible, but he is seen through wisdom and similar powers*” (Jaafari-Dehaghi 1998: 73). Yet, the answers on question 30 provides an opening: (30.4) *Ohrmazd, the beneficent creator is a spirit even among spirits, and the spiritual beings vision of him is (like) that which is manifest to the material beings through watching the spiritual beings. (30.5) But when through the great kindness of the Creator the spiritual beings put on worldly appearances, or moreover, when they give a spiritual sense of sight to the beings of the material world, then the consciousness can see the spiritual beings through a worldly sense in just such a way as when one sees bodies in which the soul is, or when one sees fire in which is Wahram, or when one sees water in which is its own spirit.* (Jaafari-Dehaghi 1998: 93). The identifying text on the NRu I relief demonstrates that Ahura Mazda *could* be depicted with a human appearance, but the rarity of such depictions indicate that it certainly remained exceptional.

The NRu I relief of Ardashir I is the only relief with the name of Ahura Mazda inscribed on it, therefore it is evident that one has to start the survey with this relief. The Ahura Mazda on NRu I is a bearded figure who holds a barsum in his left hand, the beribboned ring in his right hand, who is (as opposed to the king) not armed and wears a mural crown through which a hair globe protrudes.

The older reliefs at Firuzabad and Naqsh-e Rostam differ mainly in the headdress / hairdo (Pl. 1). Although these two reliefs are less detailed, it is clear that the man at Firuzabad wears a cylindrical headdress, at NRj III with a mural crown indicated on the side and a hair globe mounted on top. The NRu I relief seems to have set the example for the canon of Ahura Mazda in the other investitures on horseback: apart from Bishapur I which is too damaged to distinguish all the details, the gods are very similar *except* for the absence of the barsum. The barsum also lacks in Ardashir II's Taq-i Bustan I investiture (although there is one in the hands of Mithra) but probably re-appeared in the much later iwan of Taq-i Bustan III (Pl. 4). A perforation to fit something is clearly visible in the hand on Pl. 14 and in this particular context, a barsum seems by way the most likely item. The barsum is an object that is used in religious rituals and thus belongs in the hands of a priest or of lower spirits or divinities (but not as we shall argue *infra*, in those of the supreme god).

Identifying inscriptions on the reliefs (Pl. 3, 7-8)

The second element that has to be considered is the presence of texts on the Sasanian reliefs. There are inscriptions identifying the kings (Naqsh-i Rajab I, Naqsh-i Rostam I and VI, Bishapur V, Taq-i Bustan II and possibly at Barm-i Dilak I and II) and even the high priest Kartir (Sar Mashhad, Naqsh-i Rostam, Naqsh-i Rajab) (see Back 1978: 279-520; Gropp 1969: 256-257), but the god is only identified by a single phrase on Ardashir's relief at Naqsh-i Rostam I. It is the first investiture scene on horseback and apparently for some reason a need was felt to identify both the king *and* the god by separate trilingual inscriptions that were placed on the breast of the respective horses. The inscription on Ardashir's horse is written (top to bottom) in Parthian, Greek and Middle Persian. It reads "This is the image of his Zoroastrian Majesty Ardashir, King of Kings from Iran, whose appearance derives from the gods, the son of his majesty, King Papak" (Back 1978: 281; on the translation of *kē č'hr az yazdān* as "whose appearance derives from the gods", see Panaino 2007 and Gyselen 2009: 6-7, 14-15). On the opposite horse, the trilingual inscription reads "This is the image of the God Ahura Mazda/Zeus" (Back 1978: 282). This equation of Zeus (Greek text) and Ahura Mazda (Middle Persian and Parthian text) is not surprising. It follows the Seleucid and Parthian tradition in which Hellenistic religious iconography and identities were adopted in Zoroastrian iconography (Boyce 1979: 82; Sarkosh-Curtis 2007: 423). The inscription identifying Ahura Mazda is a surprisingly simple statement and lacks any protocol or extensive titles, something which remains to be explained (von Gall 1990: 102). It has been suggested that depicting Ahura Mazda was a novelty and an adapted terminology was lacking (Overlaet 2011: 334) and that the text was a later addition, possibly from the time of Shapur I (Canepa 2010: 576). In this regard, it must be noted that also the sequence of the three languages is different in this second inscription. The top language is now Middle Persian, followed by Parthian and finally by Greek, that has moved from the middle to the last place. This change in the sequence reflects the changed importance of the respective languages. By the time this inscription was added to the relief, Middle Persian had seemingly become the most important language.

The absence of chiselled identifying texts on other reliefs should not necessarily be considered as an *argumentum ex silentio* to prove the absence of texts. The deterioration of the rock surface on many reliefs may



Fig. 2. The relief of Shapur I at Naqsh-i Radjab and detail of the inscription: Parthian and Middle Persian next to one another, below the Parthian text the Greek version. drawing: after Flandin & Coste 1843-54: Pl. 191 / photo: E. Smekens, Ghent University)

have caused the loss of inscriptions. At Naqsh-i Rostam VI, e.g., only part of a Greek text is preserved under the belly of the royal horse (Herrmann, Mackenzie & Howell Caldecott 1989: 16-17, Pl. 14a) whereas on other monuments of Shapur I, we always have the combination of Middle Persian, Parthian and Greek. Gropp suggested the Middle Persian and Parthian



Fig. 3. Drawing of the Ardashir II/Shapur II relief
with the Shapur II/III text within its architectural setting
(drawing after Fukai, Sugiyama, Kimata & Tanabe 1983: Pl. XXIII).

version may have stood on the flaked horse's breast (Gropp 1969: 256-257). If this were to be true, and it does seem probable, then the Greek version would have been placed at the lowest position, exactly as on the NRu I relief. This idea agrees with the placement of the inscriptions on Shapur's Naqsh-e Rostam I relief (Fig. 2). Middle Persian is on the right, in front of the horses, while the Parthian is on the breast of the horse, above the Greek version². Since the reliefs are known to have been painted, the

² Note that this sequence is reversed on the drawing of the inscriptions by Flandin & Coste. The Greek version is erroneously placed above the Parthian (Flandin, Eug. & Coste, P., 1843-54: Pl. 190).

possibility exists that texts were also painted on rather than chiselled. On Bishapur V, however, there is a chiselled text that identified the king as Bahram I (the royal name was later replaced by that of Narseh, see MacKenzie 1981). In this case, one could expect that if there had been a text identifying the god, it would also have been chiselled rather than painted. Its absence suggests that there was apparently no need, the identity of the divine image must have been evident to the spectators.

The remainder of the inscriptions on Sasanian reliefs are in Middle Persian only. An inscription, possibly with the name “Bahram”, was once noticed at Barm-i Dilak II but due to rock deterioration, is now beyond recognition (Shahbazi 1998: 59-60). Another inscription at Barm-i Dilak I is too deteriorated to allow a reliable reading and has sparked the most diverse identifications (Shahbazi 1998: 60). Two extensive inscriptions naming Shapur II and III in the smaller grotto at Taq-i Bustan (Fig. 3; Pl. 13) were probably added to usurp the relief of Ardashir II who depicted himself next to Shapur II (Overlaet 2011).

An actual meeting between the king and a god (Ahura Mazda)?

Ardashir’s reliefs at Firuzabad and Naqsh-e Rostam depict an investiture that takes place in the presence of a large group of people (Pl. 1-2). Behind the king stands a servant holding a fly-whisk, a scene that recaptures the well known royal Achaemenid images at nearby Persepolis. Three more male adults are present at Firuzabad; two male adults, a child and two women (?) are present at Naqsh-e Rostam. Ardashir’s investiture on horseback at Naqsh-e Rostam seems to be a turning point. The only “bystander” that is kept in the scene is the servant holding the fly-whisk (Pl. 2). He is standing somewhat unconvincingly behind the hind-part of the royal horse while he holds the fly-whisk behind the king’s head. Clearly, at this point in time, the association with this in origin Achaemenid protocol was still considered to be an essential sign of the royal status. The defeated enemies under the horses (“Artaban and Ahriman”), like the defeated Roman emperors on later investiture scenes, can hardly be considered as actually “attending” the investiture. Their presence is obviously symbolic. Like the barsman, the servant disappears from the later investiture reliefs and none of these depict any additional courtiers or nobles. At Taq-i Bustan I, it is Mithra, another god that is present. He holds a barsman and acts as a witness to the oath of Ardashir II (on the mixture of the divine and royal

investiture of Ardashir II by Ahura Mazda / Shapur II, see Overlaet 2012). At Taq-i Bustan III there is a woman who is commonly considered to be the goddess Anahita. She pours a liquid (water or wine?) from a ewer while holding a second ring and is thus not a bystander but an essential part of the ongoing ritual. To summarize, it is only on the two earliest investiture reliefs, those of Ardashir I, that several “witnesses” seem to be present during the investiture ceremony. At the investiture on horseback at Naqsh-e Rostam I, this is reduced to the servant with a fly-whisk and on later reliefs there are no more bystanders attending the meeting between the human king and the divinity/divinities. The kneeling roman emperor on Bishapur I is a reference to an historic event that is different from the “investiture”.

The beribboned investiture ring: giving, accepting, holding or showing? (Pl. 5-6)

The centre of attention in an investiture scene is of course the beribboned ring, considered to represent the investing of the king with the royal *khvarnah*, the divine empowerment and good fortune. Distinctive variations

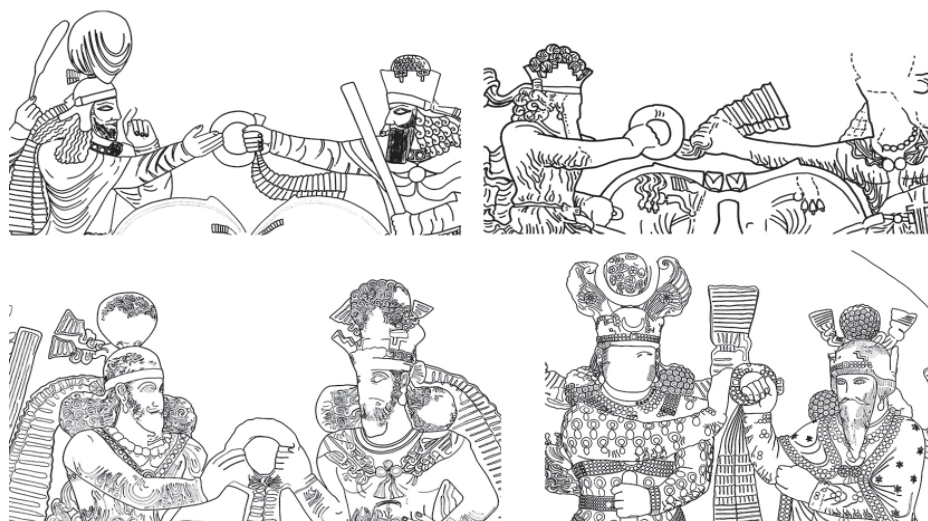


Fig. 4. The four variants in the position of the beribboned ring (compare Pls. 1-6).

in the positioning of the rings must be of importance and as such do need to be explained. When placed in chronological order, there are four distinctive positions:

Ardashir I:

The king holds or touches the ring held by his protagonist while his left hand is in an attitude of respect/adoration (Pl. 5 top and centre).

Shapur I & Bahram I/Narseh

The ring is held by the god while the ribbons are fluttering towards the open hand of the king. Both riders hold the reigns with their left hand (no gesture of respect/adoration). (note: most details are lost on Bishapur I). (Pl. 5 bottom, Pl. 6 top)

Ardashir II

Taq-i Bustan I: The king is in the act of taking hold of the ring while his left hand rests on his sword. The left hand of the protagonist rests on his belt. (Pl. 6 centre)

Khusrow II

Taq-i Bustan III: the king places the palm of his hand flat against the ring. The left hand rests on the grip of the sword. The king is clearly not *receiving* or *taking* the ring. The position of his hand seems rather to reflect an attitude of respect or recognition versus the ring, very much like one would do when taking an oath. The woman on his right holds an identical ring in exactly the same position. (Pl. 6 bottom)

The investiture reliefs: an alternative interpretation

Supposing that one did *not* have the inscription on the NRu I relief stating that the investing figure was Ahura Mazda/Zeus, then the most obvious interpretation of the Firuzabad and Naqsh-e Rostam reliefs would have been as the representation of a ceremony in which the king is installed by the religious and/or political authority. Incidentally, this is exactly what must have happened if one believes the (limited) historic information that we

have on the rise to power of Ardashir I. The exact ascent to power and the family lineage of Ardashir are still a matter of controversy (see Daryaei 2010: 242-243). Ardashir was the son of Pabag and claims lineage from Sasan, who according to Tabari, was the father of Pabag and someone who held the office of head of the Anahita temple (Aram & Gyselen 2003: 21) (however, Sasan's name may also refer to a protective deity, see Daryaei 2007: 16-17; 2010: 242-243). Tabari further informs us that Pabag, who was the local king of Cihra, a district of Istakhr, had inherited this position of high priest of the Anahita temple. It was Pabag who dethroned the king of Istakhr and presented his son Shapur (the brother of Ardashir I) as king to the Parthian overlord. Following the protests of Ardashir and the accidental death of Shapur, his brother Ardashir, eventually came to power. This event has to be dated somewhere between 205/206 and the Battle of Hormizdegan in 223/224 AD. Ardashir's earliest coins from this era follow the concept of those of his brother Shapur; they bear the image of Pabag on one side and that of himself on the other (Aram & Gyselen 2003: 21-23, 117, Abb. 2, Phase 1). Aram considers the possibility that by the time these coins were minted, his father Pabag had actually died (Aram & Gyselen 2003: 22) but it may have been a way of emphasizing the royal lineage and /or the strong coalition that existed between the political and religious power.

The instalment of Ardashir as king of Persis is the subject of the relief at Naqsh-e Rostam. Such an official ceremony would normally be a fairly "public" event, hence the presence of courtiers, noblemen and/or family in the two reliefs. The presence of small (incense) altars (Firuzabad II) and/or statues (Heracles/Verethragna (?) at Naqsh-e Rostam II) and the fact that the investing figures hold a barsum, an instrument used by priests in religious rituals, testifies to this end. There is no reason why Ahura Mazda himself would need to hold a barsum; it is an instrument of adoration and as such, only makes sense in the hands of a priest (in Mithra's hands at Taq-e Bustan I, it is used by Mithra in the oath taking ritual of Ardashir II vis à vis Ahura Mazda/Shapur II, see Overlaet 2012). If Pabag was still alive when Ardashir became king of Persis (which would be convincing in view of the earliest coins with the portrait of both men), it may be Pabag who is the priest that performs the ritual on the relief at Naqsh-e Rostam. The fact that the priest is wearing a mural crown agrees with the historical information that he was not only the high priest of the Anahita temple at Istakhr but also the local king of a Persis district.

The fact that the king is actually holding the beribboned ring in his hand *together* with the priest while paying homage with his left hand, are additional elements that turn it into a representation of an event that could physically have taken place. The presence of an audience is the ultimate proof. The meeting between a god and a human, be it a king, a saint or a prophet is never done in public. If a divine contact is thought to have taken place, it is always an ecstatic, individual event. History has ample examples of this. Moses was alone on Mount Sinai when he received the Ten Commandments and the Covenant and Muhammad had his visions and revelations during his lonely retreats in the cave of Hira. In any other situation, the credibility of the meeting is simply compromised. One needs only to remember the case of Bernadette of Lourdes who — on several occasions — saw and spoke with the Virgin Mary at Lourdes in the presence of a mass of spectators. Unfortunately, these crowds could not see or hear the Virgin and only saw a girl talking to thin air. Understandably, her *Russell's teapot* brought her much disbelief and it took a long time before the Roman Catholic Church saw it fit to recognise this event as a genuine apparition, capitalizing on a growing popular devotion following inexplicable healings at the Lourdes cave. Depicting one's meeting with the supreme god in the presence of high ranking courtiers and subjects (who could testify to or deny the event!), could easily backfire and would place the king in a vulnerable position.

An additional support for the idea that Ardashir I was crowned at the Anahita temple of Istakhr, is the presence of an architectural element behind Ardashir. A door opening is recognisable and two people are standing in what must be either the inside of a building or the outside of what could be an open air sanctuary. The site of Naqsh-i Radjab may have been such an open air sanctuary since traces of either a building (Bier 1983: 315) or a wall (Kleiss 1976: 139-140, Abb. 7, 11) closing off the entrance to the area are still visible (Pl. 10-11). The site has been put forward as the place where the coronation took place (Sarre & Herzfeld 1910: 98) or even as the possible location of the Anahita temple itself (Bier 1983: 315-316 / Kaim 2008). Other scholars place the temple within the confines of the walled city of Istakhr, however (Daryaee 2010: 245). Obviously, excavations at Naqsh-i Radjab are necessary to establish the true character of the site.

When interpreting the relief of Ardashir I at Firuzabad, one can follow the same reasoning. They are both holding the ring, there are spectators

and the investing figure is holding a barsum; all this suggests the king is facing a priest, rather than a god.

It thus seems reasonable to conclude that the two earliest investiture reliefs are best explained as the representation of an actual ceremony lead by a high priest, in the case of Naqsh-i Radjab, of the temple at Istakhr. With the location of Naqsh-i Radjab, at the edge of Istakhr itself, a different explanation would in itself be remarkable. The relief at Firuzabad may be the older of the two. Daryaee suggested that it was sculpted at the foundation of Firuzabad, a city that based its concept on Darabgird, and may date as early as 205-206 AD. The ceremony could then have been performed by the priesthood attached to a temple at either Darabgird or at the newly founded city of Firuzabad itself (Daryaee 2007: 17). The Naqsh-i Radjab relief may commemorate his following rise to power as king of Persis, prior to the confrontation with Artaban in 224 AD (Daryaee 2010: 251).

At this point, it must be mentioned that there is no general agreement on the dating of the first three reliefs of Ardashir I. In the present reasoning we consider the Firuzabad and Naqsh-i Radjab investitures, because of the differences in style and their technical execution, as clearly pre-dating the highly polished Naqsh-i Rostam relief. Numismatic evidence has been cited to oppose this idea, however. Alram pointed out that the royal korymbos is present only on Ardashir's coins that were minted after his victory on Artaban, in phase 3 of his chronology (228/229 or 229/230 to 238/239) and consequently dates all three reliefs to this phase (Alram & Gyselen 2003: 148). The use on these coins of the phrase *kē čīhr az yazdān*, "whose appearance derives from the gods", a phrase which is also present in the royal titles of Ardashir at NRu I, belongs to the same phase 3 (Alram & Gyselen 2003: 143). However, we know hardly anything about the reasons behind the change of crowns and headdresses and it is very well imaginable that the korymbos had been in use in Fars long before this headdress was used on coins.

Ardashir's third relief, the investiture at Naqsh-i Rostam, changes the whole picture by using a markedly different concept. The investiture now takes place on horseback and only the fly-whisk bearer is still present; he stands next to Ardashir's horse and is partially obscured by the horse's hind part. The addition of defeated enemies, the Parthian king and "Ahriman", under the feet of the horses raises the representation to a more symbolic level. This is no longer an actual event with its specific details

that is depicted. The presence of the Parthian king provides a date for the creation of the relief, the battle of Hormizdegan in 224-225 AD (depicted on the Firuzabad II relief, see Fig. 6) is a *terminus post quem*.



Fig. 5. The royal servant/fly-whisk bearer on the Firuzabad I investiture (top left), Naqsh-i Radjab III (top right), Naqsh-i Rostam I (bottom left) and the Firuzabad II battle scene (bottom right).

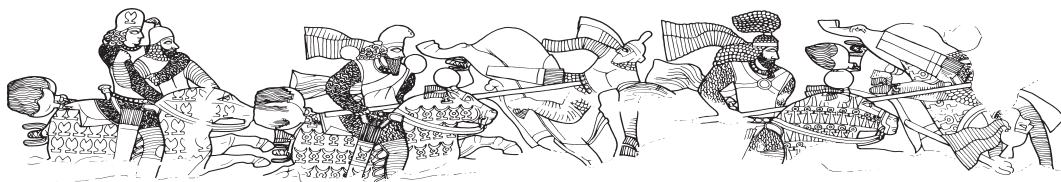


Fig. 6. The Firuzabad II relief: Ardashir I's victory on the Parthians (drawing E Smekens).

The proposed sequence and dating of the reliefs is also supported by the change in size and by the headdress of the royal servant (Fig. 5, 6). If we accept the idea that the same person is represented on four reliefs because of his function and/or flower shaped symbol (Firuzabad I and II, Naqsh-i Radjab III and Naqsh-i Rostam I), then there must be several years separating the Firuzabad from the Naqsh-i Radjab investiture because on the first relief he is still portrayed as a child and on the second he is fully grown. In both reliefs he wears the same type of hat with a curled top, whereas in the two reliefs that postdate 224 AD, he wears a hat with a simple rounded top.

The principal question that remains is whether the text that identifies Ahura Mazda/Zeus is part of the original concept (and thus Ahura Mazda was represented from the start) or whether it *could* be a later addition. If we consider this last option, the relief may have represented a priest as on the earlier reliefs. By adding the text, the image was then transformed into the representation of Ahura Mazda. If this is correct, the why and when needs to be explained.

Arguments for and against these two different interpretations, priest or god, can be advanced. It is imaginable that the investiture on horseback simply represents the more exalted installation of the king which went with the higher status after the collapse of the Parthian power while the two earlier reliefs merely represent his crowning as a local king. There are several arguments in favour of the hypothesis that it represents a priest and that the relief was later re-interpreted to represent Ahura Mazda. There is the similar outlook of the horseman and the priests on the two earlier reliefs (beard, mural crown, hair globe), the presence of the barsum (a priestly utensil) and finally there is the presence of a spectator, the valet with the fly-whisk.

Another but much more problematic detail that could be seen as referring to a priest-king of Istakhr is the “tamga” on the horse’s tail wrapping (Pl. 12). This symbol is also known from other horse representations on the Sasanian reliefs and is sometimes considered to be the royal symbol par excellence (Gyselen 2011: 8). It decorates the caparison of Ardashir’s horse in the battle representation at Firuzabad (Vanden Berghe & Smekens 1984: 62-63, Fig. 8, 12) and it is used on the thigh³ and on the saddle strap of the steed in the Taq-i Bustan iwan (Fukai & Horiuchi 1972: Pl. LV-LVI) (Pl. 12). As such it has been defined as the *frawahr* or *fravashi*, a protective spirit of royalty.

The significance of symbols is difficult to establish without written evidence, however, and possibly it could be interpreted in various manners, depending on its context. It is also found on Sasanian coins (Alram & Gyselen 2003: 256-258) and recently it was even interpreted as the symbol of Apam-Napat. This last interpretation does not convince, however, its argumentation being merely that the sign is supposed to mimic an Eros figure who is in turn associated with Apam-Napat (Soudavar 2009: 426-427). Nevertheless, even if this were to be correct, it need not conflict with the symbol’s use on the reliefs since this water deity is associated with horses. Yasna 65.12, to Ardvi Sura Anahita and the waters, mentions “the swift horses” of Apam-Napat (Darmesteter 1960: 406). In *Yt.* 19.52 dedicated to Apam-Napat himself, it says “*We worship the High Lord (bərəzantəm ahurəm), kingly, shining, Son of the Waters, who has swift horses, the hero who gives help when called upon. (It is) he who created men, he who shaped men, the god amid the waters, who being prayed to is swiftest of all to hear*” (Boyce 1986: 148). The water aspect has led to associations of Apam-Napat with Anahita while the creative element that is ascribed to Apam-Napat in the above mentioned *Yt.* 19.52 also leads to the association with Ahura Mazda (Boyce 1986). It goes to show that with the little we know of the early Sasanian religion, almost any identification can be proposed. Formally, the most convincing idea remains to see it as a combination of a ring and a ribbon tied with a bowtie and two ends hanging down. Signs like the “fravashi” may thus in reality have harbored very different associations depending on the context they were used in.

³ Usually referred to as a “brand”, the sign stands out in high relief on the horse’s flank. The mark was thus neither branded nor shaven but was formed by the hair left standing when clipping the horse.

At this point, it must be mentioned that the famous Anahita temple of Istakhr may have harbored more than just the cult of the goddess Anahita. We simply do not know enough on the formation of the Mazdaean religion and the symbiosis of the various divine beings in the early Sasanian period. Chaumont emphasized the bloody and military character of the early Anahita cult (Ardashir I and Shapur II both send heads of enemies to be exposed in the temple) and suggested that also the *yazatan* (particularly Ahura Mazda) of the Mazdaean clergy were venerated at the same temple (Chaumont 1958: 158-161). Such a symbiosis seems very plausible and would explain several of the seeming contradictions: how a Mazdaean priest (Kartir) could eventually become the head of the Anahita temple; why Ardashir I, who must have inherited the priestly function of his father (see Chaumont 1958: 166-169), calls himself on his earliest coins nevertheless a Mazda-worshipper; and finally why Shapur I's investiture with Ahura Mazda is located at Naqsh-e Rostam, a location that is linked with Istakhr... Whatever the exact significance of the tamga is, it is not repeated on the following investitures on horseback where we do believe Ahura Mazda was depicted. It seems therefore that is not to be considered as a symbol that is specifically linked to this god.

Even if one considers the relief scene to represent a high priest (and thus considering the inscription to be a later addition), one can not deny the symbolic elements that are present in the scene. The "Artaban" and the "Ahriman" underneath the horses were obviously not part of the actual ceremony but are symbolic representations of defeated enemies. Their identification provides another argument against the Ahura Mazda interpretation. De Jong pointed out that the Avesta never mentioned the image of Ahura Mazda on horseback and that although Ardashir had clearly defeated Artaban, one could not say that Ahura Mazda had ever defeated Ahriman (De Jong 2006: 238). It was an ongoing but yet undecided battle but the "Ahriman" on the relief does not seem to be alive and struggling! He is shown with closed eyes and seems as dead as Artaban is. However, if we identify the rider as a high priest, then we must also reconsider the identity of "Ahriman". Someone wearing a diadem with snakes and who has snake shaped feet and pointed ears could simply be a local idol or god. Such an interpretation can be supported by elements from e.g. the *Letter of Tansar*. Although this document is highly disputed and certainly is not to be taken as an accurate depiction of 3rd century events, it is acceptable that the core of this document is a genuine letter by a high ranking priest (Boyce

1984: 109), a man who could be ascribed as the religious counterpart of Ardashir I. However, whether the Mazdaean clergy was as institutionalised as suggested by the letter of Tansar is doubtful. Nevertheless, the letter testifies to the importance of the religious reforms that went parallel with Ardashir's conquests. De Jong emphasized the importance of these. The destruction of sanctuaries and the confiscation of their treasures provided Ardashir with the wealth he needed to realise his political ambitions (De Jong 2006: 233). De Jong pointed out that the reorganisation of temples and their priesthoods is also reflected in the legends that surround Ardashir's exploits. He fought kings and queens that were depicted as self-styled gods or demons living in wealth, see e.g. his killing of the Worm in the *Book of Deeds of Ardashir, son of Pabag* (De Jong 2006: 235). That the aggressive attitude versus idolatry and the strive to unification of religion and priesthood instigated under Ardashir continued under the reign of his son Shapur and his successors is apparent from Kartir's inscription. He stated that during the reign of Bahram II: *...from province to province, place to place, throughout the empire the rites of Ohrmezd and the gods became more important and the Mazdayasnian religion and magians were greatly honoured in the empire and great satisfaction befell the gods and water and fire and beneficent creatures, and great blows and torments befell Ahreman and the demons, and the heresy of Ahreman and the demons departed and was routed from the empire. And Jews and Buddhists and Hindus and Nazarenes and Christians and Baptists and Manichaeans were smitten in the empire, and idols were destroyed and the abodes of the demons disrupted and made into the thrones and seats of the gods*" (KNRm VI, §11, Herrmann, Mackenzie & Howell Caldecott 1989: 58). The naked creature with wide open mouth under the hooves of Ahura Mazda in the investiture of Shapur I at Bishapur I (see Herrmann, Mackenzie & Howell 1983: 8, fig. 1, Pl. 1-4) is similarly to be regarded as an idol or demon rather than as Ahriman himself. If there are no snakes in his hair or snake-shaped feet, then the creature would definitely be a different idol or demon than the one depicted at Naqsh-e Rostam, but the rock is too deteriorated to ascertain this (Pl. 15). In a way, the integration process of the Anahita temple in the Mazdaean beliefs reached an apex during the reign of Bahram II when the great Anahita temple at Istakhr is finally placed under the authority of Kartir. From then on, the Anahita temple and its priesthood resorted under the Mazdaean administration. The statement about his battle against idols may reflect an iconoclasm that explains why

we have no investiture relief of Bahram II and Ahura Mazda, although this king left many other reliefs in Fars province.

In the light of all this, it seems plausible to see the Naqsh-i Rostam relief as a double — political and religious — statement of power; Ardashir with his political foe under the hooves of his horse is invested by the Chief Priest, whose horse treads on a fallen idol. Its position next to an Elamite relief seems also to be significant. Although it is now largely destroyed by the relief of Bahram, we know it depicted gods on snake thrones, possibly even holding snakes in their hands (compare e.g. Kurangun: Vanden Berghe & Smekens 1984: 28-29, fig. 2; Vanden Berghe 1986: fig. 1-2; Seidl 1986) (Pl. 9). The trampled idol with its snake shaped feet and the snake diadem may very well have been a direct reference to the Sasanian religious dominance over ancient Elamite beliefs, possibly even referring to the destruction of some specific Elamite sanctuary.

The position and influence of the Anahita cult (but not the temple!) must already effectively have waned during the reign of Shapur I, since Anahita is not even mentioned in his inscription on the Kaba at Naqsh-i Rostam (Trever 1967: 124-125). It seems likely that an inscription that changed the identity of a priest into that of Ahura Mazda (and in this way set the canon for the investiture scenes of Shapur himself) was added during Shapur's reign. It is not until the reign of Narseh that Anahita would again surface as an important deity in stately matters (conf. the Paikuli inscription).

If one was to speculate about the timing of the inscriptions and the identity of the priest on the Naqsh-i Rostam relief, several scenarios are possible:

If it is indeed a priest attached to the Anahita temple, it is imaginable that the inscription on Ardashir's horse, stating that he was a Zoroastrian king, was a first stage in promoting the Mazdaean element at the site. "This is the image of his Zoroastrian Majesty Ardashir, King of Kings from Iran, whose appearance derives from the gods, the son of his majesty, King Papak" gives an indication as to when the text may have been written. Ardashir's coinage identifies him as a Mazda worshipper from phase 2 onwards, i.e. from 223/224 AD (Aram & Gyselen 2003: 142-143) but it is only in phase 3 (from 226/227 or 227/228 AD onwards) that the phrase *kē čīhr az yazdān*, "whose appearance derives from the gods", is added (phase III, see Aram SNS 2003: 108, 143-148). It is also present on the rock relief. Another blow to the dominance of the Anahita cult would have

been when the second text was added (in the course of which a significant change in the sequence of the three languages took place). The “Ahura Mazda” text would then most likely have been added in the reign of Shapur. The bilingual inscription of Shapur in Tang-e Boraq also places the Middle Persian version above the Parthian (Gropp 1969: 234). On his relief at Naqsh-i Radjab Shapur placed Middle Persian and Parthian text next to one another and the Greek version below the Parthian (Back 1978: 499 note 145). The same order must have been used on NRu VI where only some lines of Greek are preserved on the lower part while the two other languages must have been higher up on the eroded surface (see *supra*). The sequence of the languages on Ahura Mazda’s horse (Middle Persian — Parthian — Greek) is thus in line with known inscriptions from the time of Shapur I and reflect the growing importance of Middle Persian at the cost of Parthian and Greek.

Yet, it can not be excluded either that from the beginning it was meant to represent Ahura Mazda. Although this is very unlikely, it can not be excluded that this was a first attempt at creating the divine image, an attempt that came with iconographic mistakes that were to be filtered out in later representations. The mere fact that at some later point it was deemed necessary to add the Ahura Mazda identification would certainly indicate that not everybody understood this figure to be the representation of the supreme god...

The changes in the iconography

Once the representation under Ardashir’s reign had changed from an actual ceremony that took place in the company of courtiers and priests (Firuzabad and Naqsh-i Radjab) into the more symbolic event with the addition of the presence of the foes (Naqsh-i Rostam I), and once this was (re-)interpreted as the representation of Ahura Mazda bestowing the *khvarnah* upon the king, it is easy to explain why certain details had to change in the later reliefs. Elements that conflicted with the representation of Ahura Mazda, the highest divinity, had to be removed, hence the disappearance of the barsum, the valet, possibly the tamga on the horse’s tail cloth and above all, the physical contact between the king and the god. It had become a symbolic representation instead of a real event at a specific moment in time. This also explains why the king no longer needs to keep his left hand in a gesture of respect. The ring held by the god was no longer

touched by the king either, since there was no physical transfer of an investiture ring. In the three investitures on horseback that follow Ardashir's Naqsh-i Rostam I, the king no longer holds or touches the investment ring. It are merely the ribbons that are blown in his direction and seem to brush against his outstretched open hand. This may be a way of emphasizing the distance between the spiritual and physical world. All these changes were completed by the time Ardashir's successor, Shapur I, had his investitures sculpted at Naqsh-e Rostam and Bishapur.

Since the change in the iconography was established by the time the next investiture relief was made, that of Shapur I at Naqsh-e Rostam, the shift towards Ahura Mazda as the main deity (at the cost of Anahita) must have taken place during Ardashir's reign or at the latest during the reign of Shapur I, when the Mobed Kartir was first promoted. Such a change must be the outcome of a real power struggle between the various cults at the royal court. It must have culminated in, and ended with the appointment of the Mazdaean Kartir as high priest of the Anahita temple at Istakhr. He himself mentions this event during the reign of Bahram II: *...and he made me Mobed and judge of the whole empire. And he made me director and authority over the fire of Anahid-Ardashir and Anahid the Lady (in) Stakhr. And he named me "Kerdir, soul-saver of Bahram, Mobed of Ohrmezd"* (KNRm VI, §10, Herrmann, Mackenzie & Howell Caldecott 1989: 58).

The iconography of the investiture reliefs changes again in the reliefs of Ardashir II (379-383) and of Khusrow II (591-628) at Taq-i Bustan. The barsum re-appears in the scene and the rings are touched again by the kings. These are important changes that need to be explained. In fact, it is merely the return to elements that are part of actual ceremonies. In the case of Taq-i Bustan I, the relief depicts Ardashir II who had been invested as a regent by Shapur II himself on the condition to pass the throne on to Shapur III when he came of age. Mithra's function in the event is that of divine guardian of the oath, hence his presence with barsum. The Taq-i Bustan I relief deliberately mixes the images of Ahura Mazda with that of Shapur II and thus depicts a mixture of an actual and a symbolic event (see Overlaet 2012). In this respect the touching of the investiture ring is again possible. The scene of Taq-i Bustan III need not to conflict with this view either. Instead of considering it as an investiture by Ahura Mazda and Anahita, we may have to see the relief as depicting an actual ceremony in which the king pledges his allegiance, with a *mithra*, in the presence of a high priest of Ahura Mazda and a high priestess of Anahita. There are

several arguments that can be advanced in favor of this interpretation. First of all it would be very strange, in fact possibly even regarded as blasphemous, to depict the king larger than the two gods (von Gall 1990: 100 is of the opinion that because of this, it can not be an investiture scene. Soudavar does not agree on this: Soudavar 2009: 418-419). The argument that this is possible because in view of the low podiums they stand on, these are statues rather than the actual divine beings, is hardly convincing. On the contrary, the king is standing on an identical podium that is, however, nearly double in height of those of the two “gods”. Secondly, it would be strange if the ring stood for the *khvarnah* because “Anahita” is holding exactly the same type of ring as “Ahura Mazda”. Would this mean that both of them had to bestow the *khvarnah* upon the king? That the *khvarnah* was, in other words, something that was not unique but that could be fractioned? As von Gall noted, this hardly seems possible (von Gall 1990: 100). The two royal companions are (or were) holding attributes or performing a ritual that referred to their function or identity. The woman is ostensibly pouring a liquid from a ewer and thus performing a libation. The object the man was holding has disappeared but it is likely to have been a barsum, judging from the position and perforation of the hand (see reconstruction on Pl. 14). The performing of a ritual libation seems to point to a priestess, rather than to Anahita, just like the use of a barsum points to a priest rather than to Ahura Mazda.

Finally, the king is clearly not “accepting” or taking a ring which is being given to him. The palm of his open hand merely touches the ring in a way that is more in accordance with making an oath or pledging loyalty than with *receiving* something. It is thus a completely different image than on the earlier investiture reliefs.

Final remarks

The current interpretation of the investing figure on the royal Sasanian investiture scenes as Ahura Mazda was based exclusively on the short trilingual phrase that is found on the relief of Ardashir I at Naqsh-e Rostam. This identification fails to explain the many differences between the reliefs, elements like the presence of bystanders, the presence of a barsum, the way the investiture ring is positioned, etc. If one rejects this automatic equation of all the investing figures with Ahura Mazda, however, a more versatile interpretation can be advanced that makes it possible to explain

most of these iconographic variations. These interpretations are certainly very speculative and most of them can neither be proven nor disproven, but they can be linked to the few historic (unfortunately often corrupted) sources we have at our disposal. Its principal arguments are mainly the results of an iconographic analysis within a very limited group of monuments. At the moment, these ideas are simply offering an alternative but in the end, more discoveries of religious monuments and documents are needed to gain a more reliable insight in the iconographic evolution. Whether the present alternative interpretations are acceptable are not, the differences that have been pointed out will always need to be explained.

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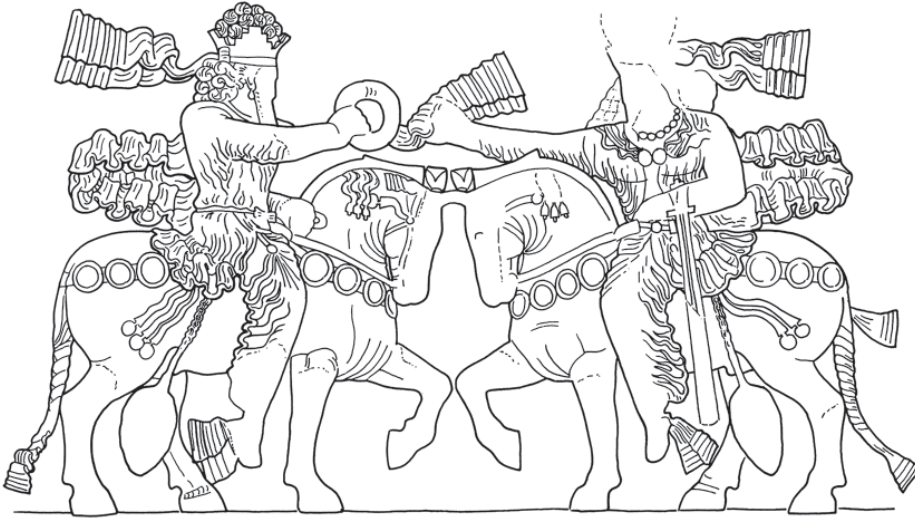
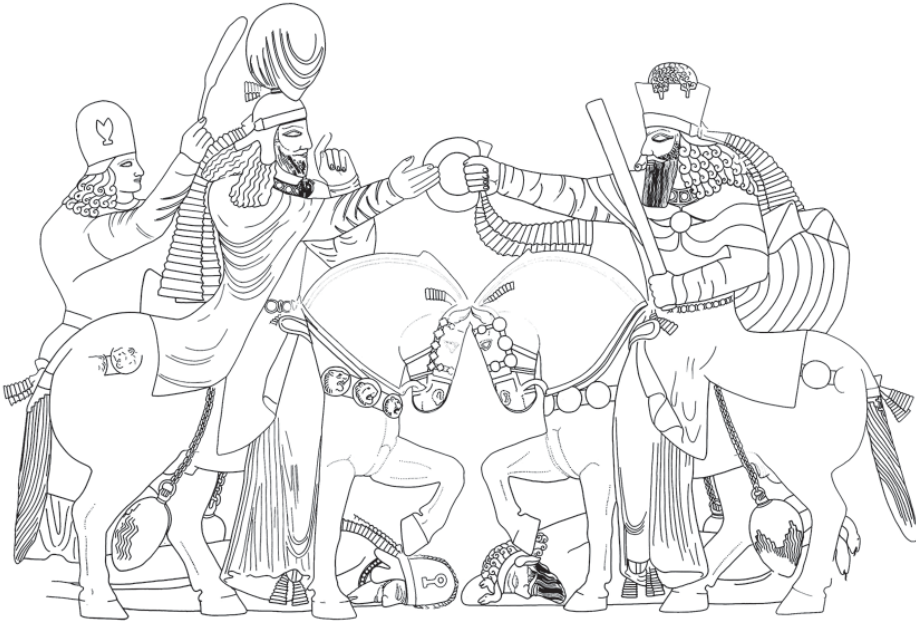
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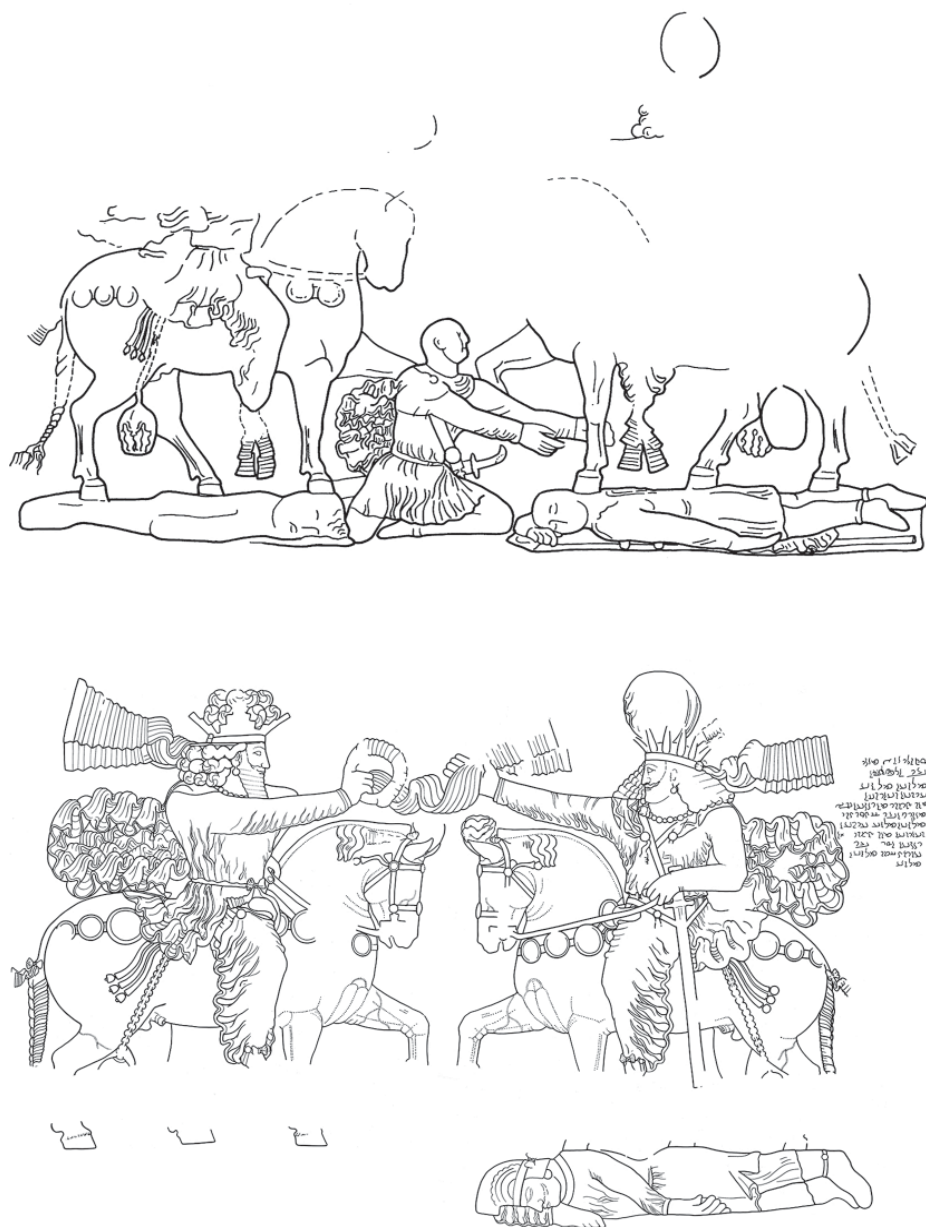
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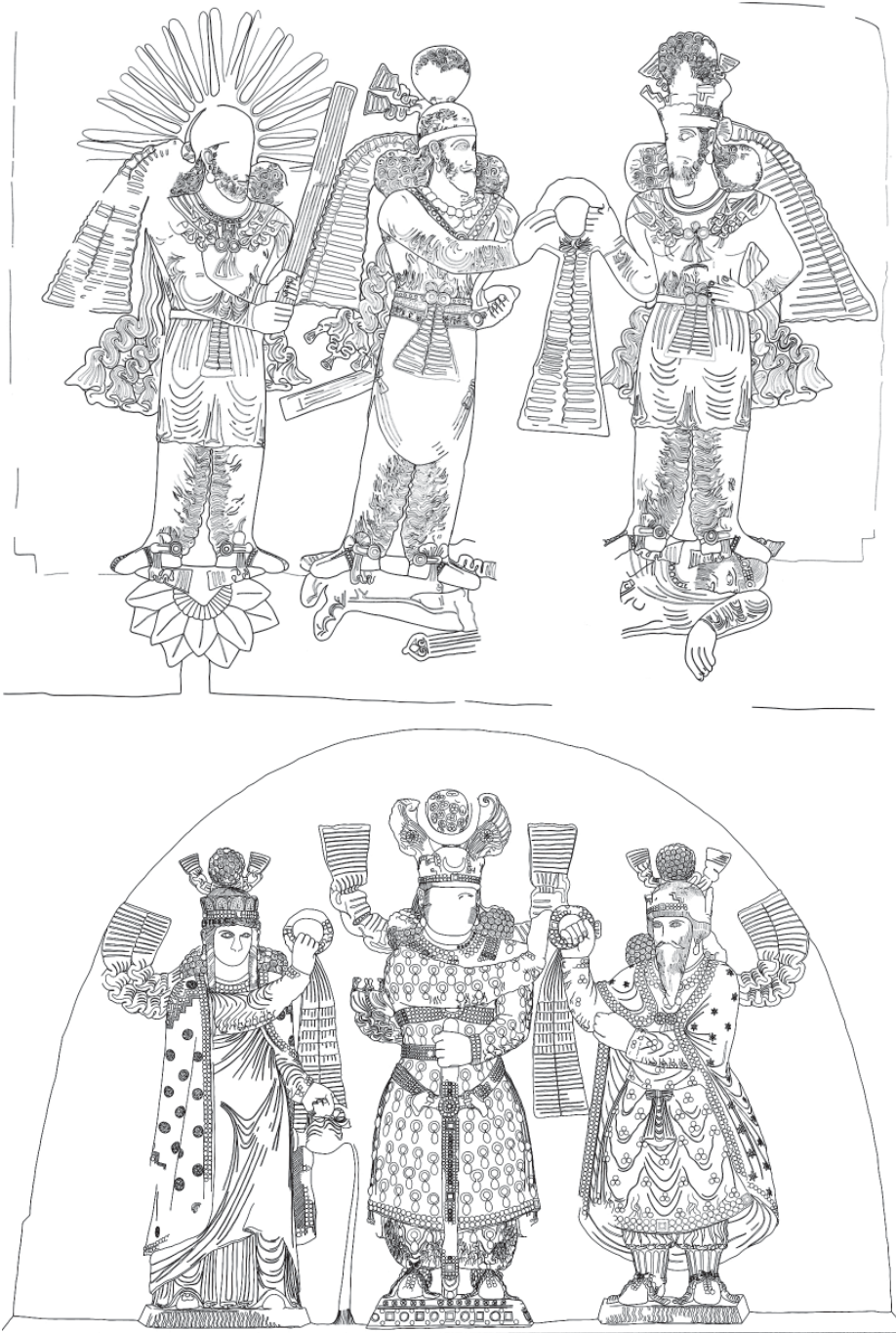
Pl. 1. The reliefs of Ardashir I at Firuzabad (top) and Naqsh-i Radjab (drawings E. Smekens, Ghent University).



Pl. 2. Top: relief of Ardashir I at Naqsh-i Rostam (Drawing Rosalind Howell Caldecott, courtesy G. Herrmann); bottom: relief of Shapur I at Naqsh-i Rostam (Drawing E. Smekens, Ghent University).



Pl. 3. Top: Bishapur I relief of Shapur I (Drawing Herrmann, Mackenzie & Howell Caldecott, 1983: fig 1); bottom: Bishapur V relief of Bahram I (Drawings Herrmann & Howell 1981: fig. 2).



Pl. 4. Top: drawing of the Taḡ-i Bostān I relief;
 bottom: drawing of the upper part of the large iwan at Taḡ-i Bostān III.
 (after Fukai, Sugiyama, Kimata & Tanabe 1983, Pl. 6 & 26).



Pl. 5. The position of the investiture rings on the reliefs of Ardashir I (top and middle) and Shapur I (bottom).
(top left photo E. Smekens, Ghent University; drawings see Pl. 1-2).



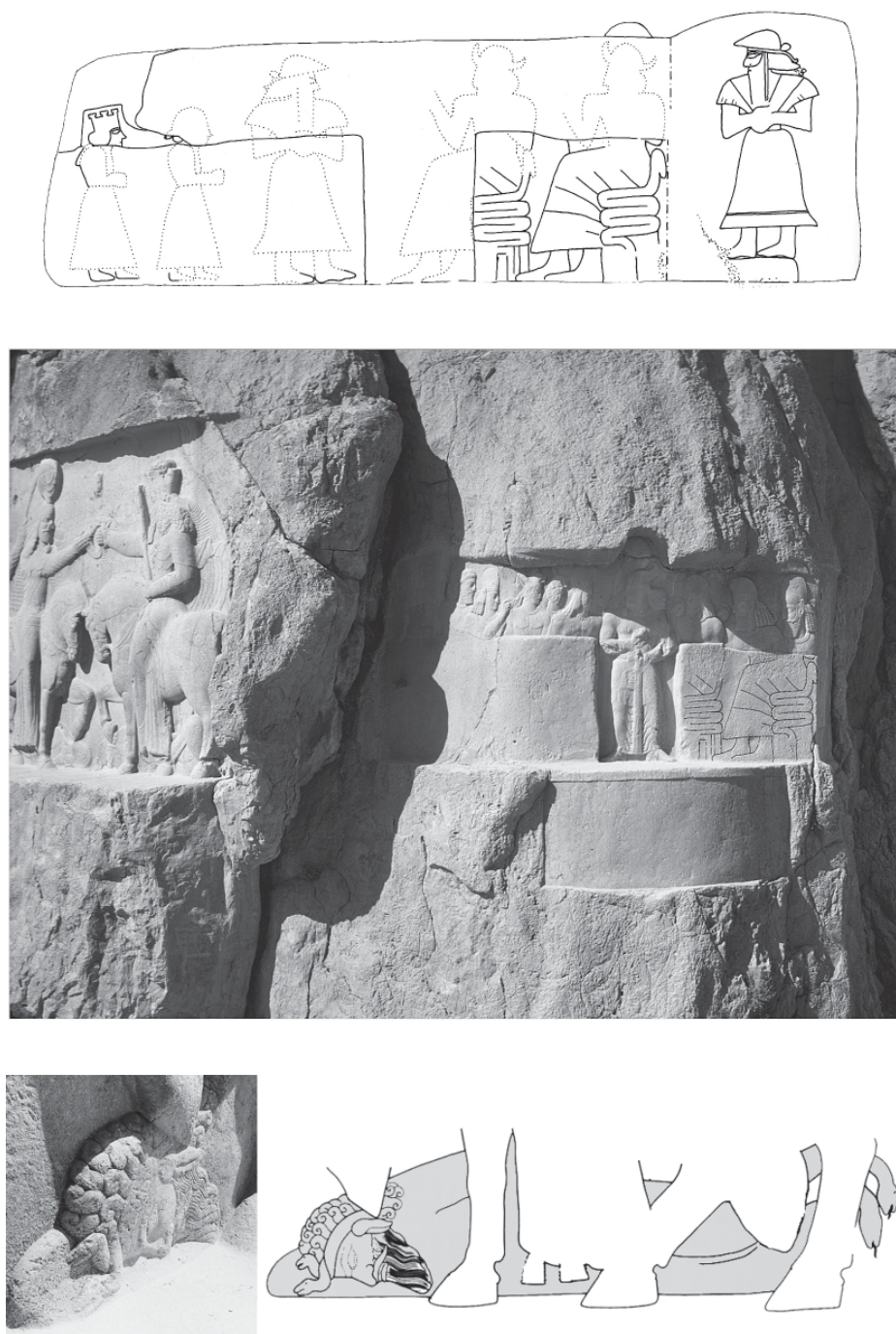
Pl. 6. The position of the investiture rings on the reliefs of Shapur I (top: Bishapur photo E. Smekens, Ghent University), Ardashir II (middle: Taq-i Bustan I, drawing see Pl. 4) and Khusrow II (bottom: Taq-i Bustan III, drawing see Pl. 4).



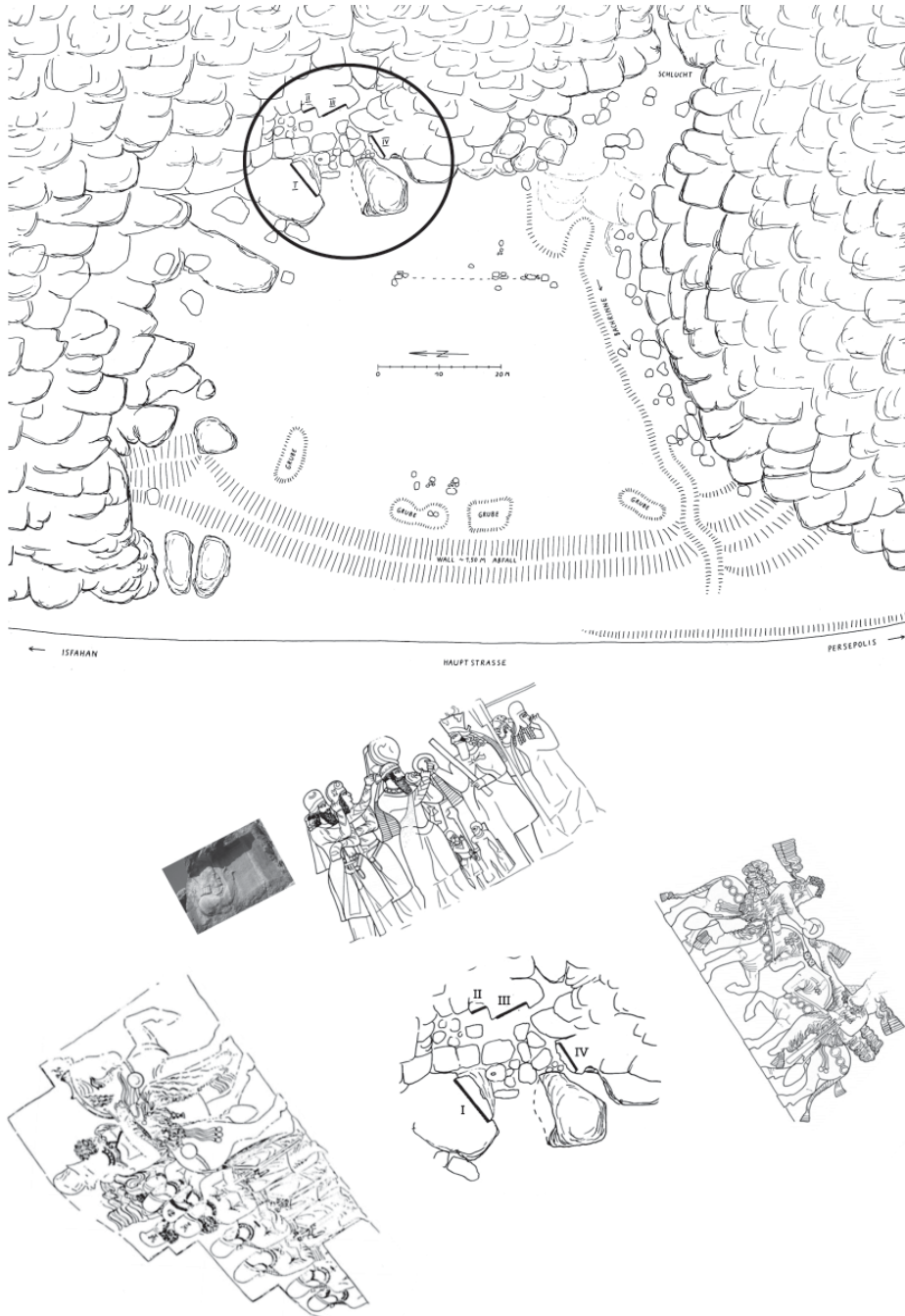
Pl. 7. Central part of the relief of Ardashir I at Naqsh-i Rostam
(photo E. Smekens, Ghent University)



Pl. 8. The trilingual inscriptions on the relief of Ardashir I at Naqsh-i Rostam.
 Top: Ardashir's horse with Parthian, Greek and Middle Persian text.
 Bottom: Ahura Mazda's horse with Middle Persian, Parthian and Greek text.
 (photo E. Smekens, Ghent University)



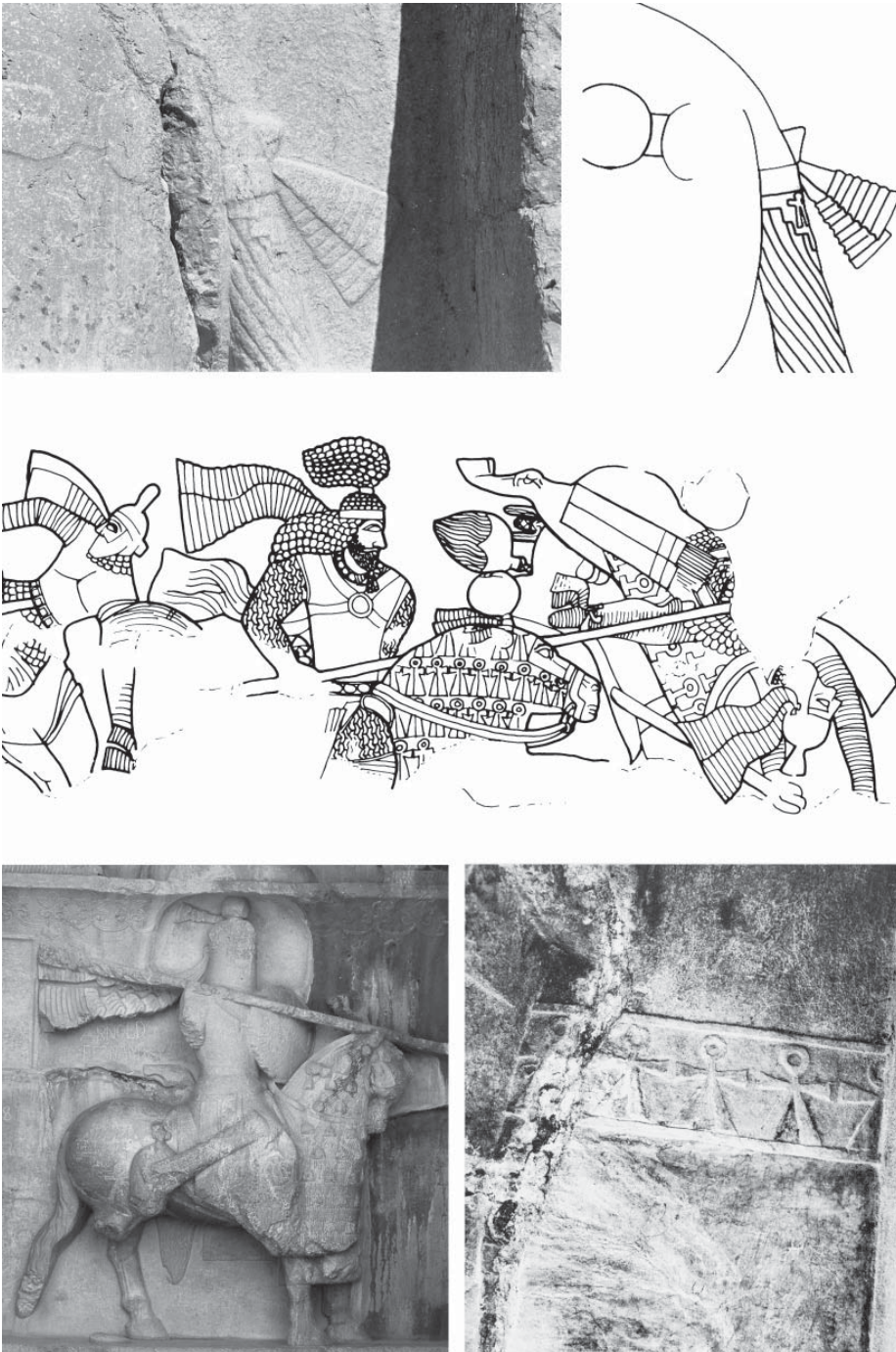
Pl. 9. Top: drawing of the Elamite relief at Naqsh-i Rostam
 (drawing Seidl 1986: Abb. 2b);
 centre: the Naqsh-i Rostam I & II reliefs (photo G. Herrmann)
 with overlay of the drawing;
 bottom: the “Ahriman” on the Naqsh-i Rostam I relief
 (photo G. Herrmann; drawing after Pl. 1).



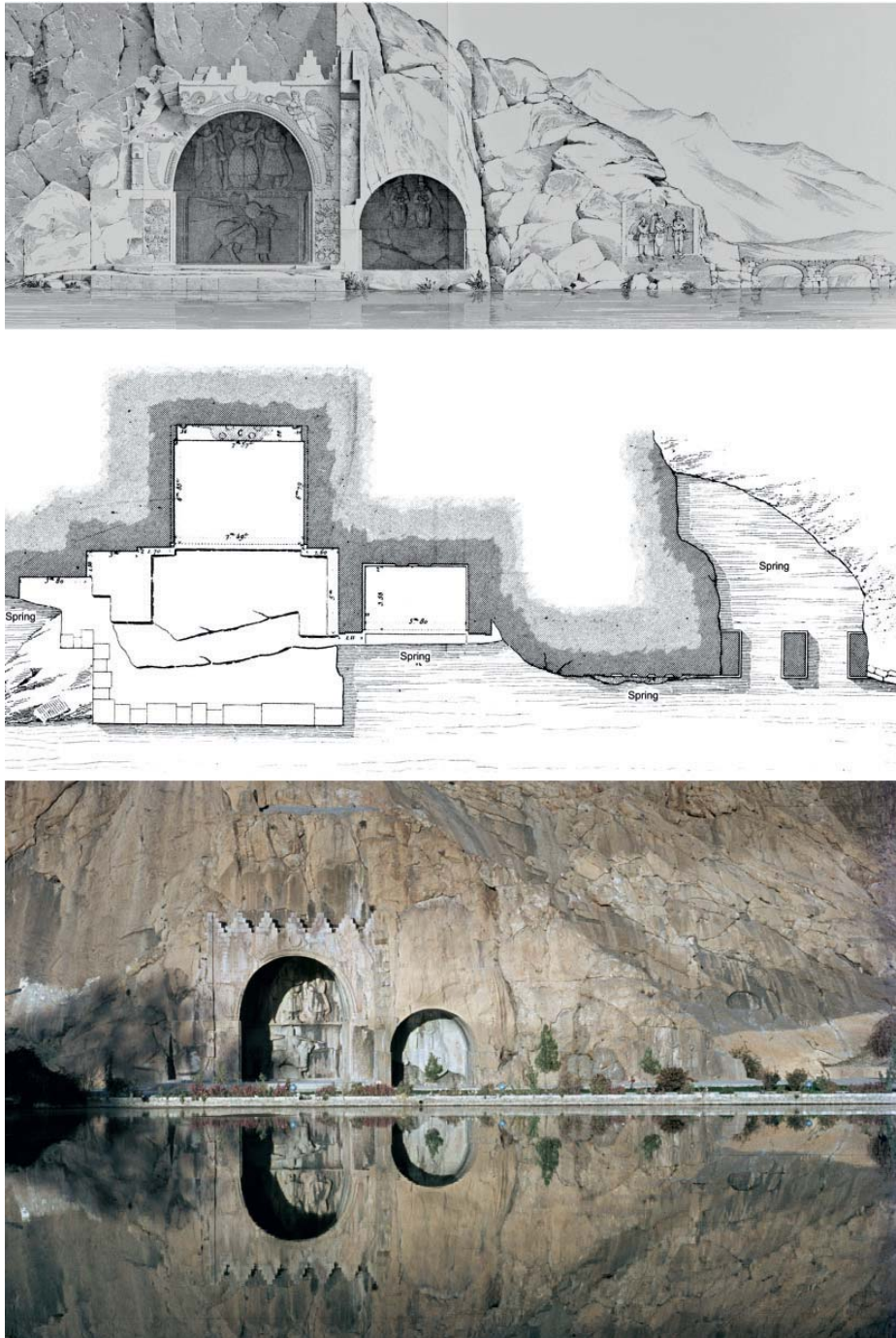
Pl. 10. Naqsh-i Radjab: plan (after Kleiss 1976: Abb. 7)
and position of the reliefs.



Pl. 11. Satellite photo with the location of Naqsh-i Radjab (Google Earth) and view towards the rock cove with the 4 reliefs (photo by the author, 2001).



Pl. 12. The “frawahr” symbol on horses. Top: the horse of Ahura Mazda on Naqsh-e Rostam I (photo & drawing courtesy G. Herrmann); centre: relief of Ardashir I at Firuzabad (drawing E. Smekens, Ghent University); bottom: the horseman in the large iwan at Taq-i Bustan (left photo, E. Smekens, Ghent University; right photo after Fukai & Horiuchi 1972: Pl. LVI).



Pl. 13. Top & centre: The Taq-i Bustan reliefs as seen in 1840 by P. Coste (after Flandin & Coste 1843-54: Pl. 2-3); bottom: photo of Taq-i Bustan reliefs in the 1960's (photo L.Vanden Berghe)



Pl. 14. The Taq-i Bustan III investiture: reconstruction with the barsum and detail of the hand with the cavity for the barsum (photos by the author, 2006).



Pl. 15. The demon underneath the horse of Ahura Mazda on the Bishapur I relief of Shapur I (photos courtesy G. Herrmann).

SOME SASSANIAN SILVER COINS DISCOVERED AT AXIOPOLIS (CERNAVODĂ, CONSTANȚA COUNTY, ROMANIA)

BY

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Abstract: Five Sassanid drachms were discovered around Axiopolis fortress before 1981. There are 2 Shapur I, 1 Yazdgerd I and 2 Khusro II. Despite the total absence of Sassanid coins in Dobruja, they could be stray-finds from the period of Valerianus I campaign against Shapur I, the others arriving maybe during the Hunnic attacks from the beginning of the Vth century or with the Armenian and Byzantine troops coming from the Persian front after 591. In spite of the strange structure of our lot, we cannot exclude completely the possibility to have a small sample of the currency of the period, arriving at the beginning of the VIIth century. The most recent coin was struck in the year 11 of Khusro's II reign (601-602 AD). The final date coincides with the military revolt against Emperor Maurice in 602, suggesting a presence of some Armenian soldiers at Axiopolis and reflecting the local impact of the mutiny.

Keywords: Sassanid, Axiopolis, Byzantine, Shapur I, Yazdgerd I, Khusro II.

In the spring of 1981, we saw several hundreds of coins (200-300) in a private collection from Cernavodă (Constanța County, Romania). There were very different issues (Greek, Celtic, Roman, Turkish), all of them being collected by the soldiers from the local garrison on the slopes of the Roman-Byzantine fortress from Axiopolis¹ (= Cernavodă, Dobruja, on the border of the Danube, 60 km from Constanța+Tomis and 100 km from Mangalia=Kallatis). Between these coins there were five Sassanid drachms (III-VII centuries): Shapur I (2), Yazdgerd I (1) and Khusro II (2). We have no other data about the context or the initial number of coins, but the scarcity of the archaeological excavations in the area — made in 1895-1896 and 1899 by P. Polonic (Barbu 1965: 237-240) — enhances the

¹ Code CT-I-m-A-02620.01 (Cernavodă, Hinog Island, Axioplois fortress), List of the Historical Monuments from Romania, year 2010.

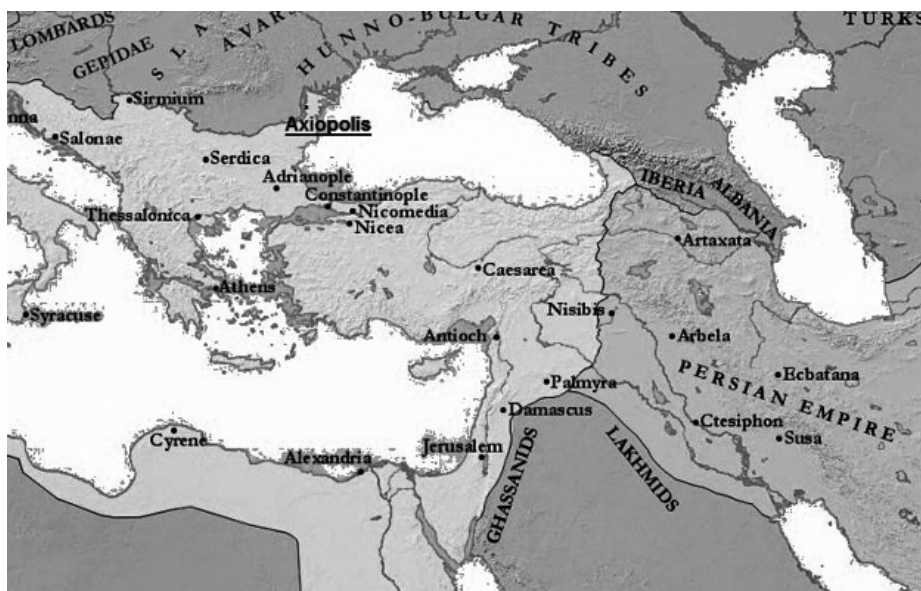
historical importance of this discovery. The intense conflicts between the Roman and Byzantine emperors and the Sassanid kings from the middle of the third century AD until 591 and during the first part of the VIIth century and also the exotic appearance of these coins (not specific for the monetary circulation of the region) in Scythia Minor increase the scientific interest of their presence — first discovery of this type from Dobruja (Ocheșeanu 2006). They could be stray-finds from the period of Valerianus I campaign against Shapur I, the others arriving maybe during the Hunnic attacks from the beginning of the Vth century or with the Armenian and Byzantine troops coming from the Persian front after 591. Even less probable, because of the strange structure of our lot, we cannot exclude completely the possibility to have a small sample of the currency of the period, arriving at the beginning of the VIIth century.

Despite the fact that we have no idea about the context of the discovery or the initial number of coins, however few commentaries are also necessary and possible. There were two drachms from Shapur I, one from Yazdgerd I and again two coins from Khusro II, struck in the years 596 and 601 AD. This structure suggests not an important accumulation, belonging to a person involved in a Sassanid structure, and not a sum with the characteristics of a payment (Gyselen 1990: 212-231), but someone having the possibility to obtain a few Persian coins, including recent ones, as a usual currency. There are several significant coincidences suggesting a direct connection between this discovery and the military and political situation in the region.

The involvement of the Roman troops from Dobruja in the Eastern campaign of Valerianus I against Shapur I was proved by the discovery of the great hoard of antoniniani from Mangalia 1960 — ancient Kallatis, Constanța county, Romania (Preda 1996: 31; Petac 2011: 199). The presence in the army of Valerianus I of some units from Axiopolis could be a good opportunity to explain the presence of Shapur I drachms in this fortress from the Lower Danube.

The attacks of the Huns on the Roman limes from the Lower Danube in the first half of the Vth century could explain maybe the presence of the Yazdgerd I drachm or maybe it belongs to a later context, as a simple part of the currency.

The latest coins are in fact the most significant for the final years of the Byzantine authority in Scythia Minor. The peace of the year 591 between the Byzantine Empire and the Sassanid kingdom offered to Emperor



Maurice the opportunity to move significant Byzantine military units from the Eastern front to the Lower Danube (Kobylinski 2005: 539), against the Avars, Slavs and Antes. Probably not by fortune both Sassanid coins of Khusro II found at Axiopolis belong to the period of Priscus campaigns to the Lower Danube (Theophylact Simocatta, VII, 7.1-5, 10.1-11.9; Whitby 1988: 275). In this context, the main reason of the presence of the Sassanid drachms seems to be the arrival of the Armenian troops in Thrace (Sebeos, VIII, 50-51; X, 53). Together with the Byzantine army movements after 591 and especially after 596, it could be also the most realistic explanation for the presence of the last Sassanid coins at Axiopolis. The peace with Avar khagan Baian in the year 600 was followed by an interesting mission of Priscus in Armenia, where he was sent to recruit 30000 Armenian settlers to consolidate the Byzantine presence in Thrace in exchange of their military services (Sebeos, XX, 79-80; Thomson 1999: 190-191). These events ended in the winter between the years 601-602 with the uprising of the Byzantine troops, who went to Constantinople, the Emperor Maurice being deposed and killed (Sebeos, XXI, 80; Theophylact Simocatta, VIII, 11, 1-6). The Danube frontier was abandoned and the border became indefensible. Because of the strong identity between the final date of the last coin — year 11 of Khusro II reign that means 601-602 A.D. — and the

events on the Lower Danube Byzantine frontier just from the same year, we suggest that this chronology could be the most realistic and acceptable hypothesis. Probably together with the Armenian troops, the last Sassanid drachms arrived at Axiopolis, suggesting the major local impact of the mutiny from 602.

Concerning the final moment of the Axiopolis fortress, there is another relevant monetary discovery from there. The two Byzantine gold coins found in 1912 in the camp (Poenaru Bordea 1985: 185; Vîlcu 2009: 12, 36, no. 19 and 67, no. 185) represent a probable *terminus post quem* for the end of the fortification. There are a tremissis from Anastasius I and another one from Heraklius, the latter struck somewhere between the years 610-613 (MIB, III, 217, no. 73 var.). A prolongation of the military settlement existence until around 615 is possible.

So, although the presence at Axiopolis of the Sassanid drachms from the first part of Khusro II reign is not a decisive argument for the discussion concerning the last days of Byzantine Dobruja, it seems however to reflect at least a particular moment, in a particular place, of the Lower Danube troops mutiny from the year 602; also, it seems to suggest the possible presence of some Armenian troops in the camp. There were two distinct moments, the mutiny from 602 and a probable Barbarian attack and the end of the fortress around the year 615.

We have a new and essential chronological reference for the understanding of the local history of Axiopolis and for the last years of the Byzantine regime in Scythia Minor.

Catalogue

*Shapur I (240-272 AD)

Obv. Bust right, wearing diadem and mural crown with korymbos and vertical earflaps.

Rv. Fire altar, flanked by two attendants wearing diadems and mural crowns.

1. Drachm 9 h; 3,42 g; 25 mm (broken); pl. I, 1.

Göbl, table II, type I / 1.

SNS, 1, type II c / 1 b, style Q, group b, mint III ("Hamadan"), years 260-272.

Obv. Bust right, wearing diadem and mural crown with korymbos and vertical earflaps.

Rv. Fire altar, flanked by two attendants wearing diadems and mural crowns.

2. Drachm 9 h; 3,21 g; 23 mm (broken); pl. I, 2.

Göbl, table II, type I / 1.

SNS, 1, type II c / 1 a or c, mint I ("Ctesiphon"?).

***Yazdgerd I (399-420 AD)**

Obv. Bust right, wearing mural crown with astral symbols.

Rv. Fire altar with two attendants.

3. Drachm 12 h; 3,51 g; 26 mm; pl. I, 3.

Göbl, table VIII, type I / 1.

SNS, 3 / 1, type 1 b 1 / 1 a var 1 a, "Western group" mint.

***Khusro II (590-628 AD)**

Obv. Cuirassed bust right, wearing composite mural crown (Göbl 2nd type) with astral symbols (crescent and star).

Rv. Fire altar, flanked by two attendants wearing capped crowns; star and crescent flanking flames.

4. Drachm 9 h; 3,44 g; 28 mm (broken); pl. I, 4.

Göbl, table XII, type II / 2; mint PR (𐭠𐭣), year 6 (596 AD).

Obv. Cuirassed bust right, wearing composite mural crown with astral symbols (crescent and star); stars flanking the crown.

Rv. Fire altar with ribbons, flanked by two attendants wearing capped crowns; star and crescent flanking flames.

5. Drachm 3 h; 3,38 g; 32 mm (broken); pl. I, 5.

Göbl, table XII, type II / 2; mint AW (𐭠𐭣), year 11 (601 AD).

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Pl. I. 1-5. Sassanid drachms from Axiopolis:
1-2, Shapur I; 3, Yazdgerd I; 4-5, Khusro II.

SAILORS, SOLDIERS, PRIESTS, AND MERCHANTS: REAPPRAISING IRAN'S EARLY CONNECTIONS TO CEYLON

BY

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Abstract: This article reinvestigates the history and historiography of early contacts between Iranians and Ceylonese (now called Sri Lankans), mainly from the fifth century BCE to fifth century CE with some extensions into later times. Why and where those connections occurred and how they shaped each groups understanding of and influence on each other are scrutinized. This analysis also will examine how and why ancient and early medieval Ceylonese records can augment Iranian history and historiography.

Keywords: Iran, Ceylon, Sri Lanka, historiography, Achaemenids, Parthians, Sasanians, sailors, soldiers, merchants, Magi, Zoroastrians, Manicheans, Nestorians, Buddhists, Muslims

Sea and land routes brought Iranians of diverse backgrounds, both directly from Iran and via India, to ancient and medieval Ceylon (Sinhala: *Silandiva*, *Senendiva* > Persian: *Serendib* > English: *Ceylon*, “island of jewels”) also known then as Taprobane (Sanskrit: *Tāmra Varṇa* > Pali: *Tāmba Vaṇṇa*, > Tamil: *Tāmbapannī*, *Thāmbapannī* > Greek: *Taprobane*, “copper-colored” describing its soil).¹ That island country, now also known as Sri Lanka (Sanskrit: *Śrī Laṃkā* > Sinhala: *Śrī Lankā*, *Sri Lanka*, “the resplendent land,” and Sanskrit: *Laṃkā dvīpa* > Sinhala: *Lanka diva*, “the resplendent island”), is located off the Indian subcontinent’s southern tip. This article will discuss how and why Iranians interacted with Ceylonese, at least episodically and perhaps frequently from ancient times (fig. 1).²

¹ Diacriticals will be used only in the first mention of a term. All dates are CE (Common Era) unless specifically noted as BCE (Before the Common Era).

² Some details were discussed previously in J.K. Choksy (2004; 2007).

Early Encounters under the Achaemenids and Parthians

The earliest Iranians, especially the Pārsa or Persians who settled in southwestern Iran and called it Pārs (later Fārs) and the Sakas or Scythians who took over southeastern Iran and called it Sakastāna (later Sistān), probably assimilated knowledge of seafaring from Mesopotamians and Elamites they encountered in the ancient Near East. Access to the Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea permitted the Persian or Achaemenian Empire to extend its reach southward and eastward. Seafaring was dependent on the monsoon winds — a southwest (to northeast) one from June to October, and a northeast (to southwest) one from November to March. Those winds would have propelled Iranian ships along the coastlines and across the open water of the Indian Ocean to the Indian subcontinent and the island of Ceylon (Potts 2006).

The fifth century BCE Greek historian Herodotus recorded that King Darius I (Old Persian: Dārayavauš, ruled 522–486 BCE) “desiring to know where the Indus River flows into the sea sent ships” to the Indian coastline, Arabian Sea, and portions of the Indian Ocean. He added that “after this reconnoitering, Darius subdued the Indians [i.e., the satrapy of Hindush,



Fig. 1. Map of Major Sites (courtesy of Google Maps).

established ca. 518 BCE] and made use of this sea" (*History* 4.44). Some of Herodotus' accounts have rightly been criticized as anecdotal, inflated, and fanciful (Flower 2006; Rood 2006; more generally Lateiner 1989: 152–160). Here historiography from ancient Ceylon may serve as augmentation. Herodotus' statement seems to find support in a considerably later Sinhala document that discusses the Murundas people (Pliny the Elder's Moruni of the first century and Ptolemy's Marundae of the second century), usually identified as Sakas or Scythians (Eggermont 1996; Kulke and Rothermund 1990: 86–87). Sinhala, descended linguistically from Sanskrit, was rendered into written form in a Southern Brahmic-derived script (Solomon 1996: 372–375; Gair 1996: 408).³

A Sinhala inscription (M111) supposedly mentions relocation of various Iranian and Indian groups across South Asia and Southeast Asia, including "sailors who were sent by Darius the Persian King of Kings (*Pārasikarāja-rājena*) to investigate the Indus River's mouth and make a report to him ... went off course ... and sailed to the island (*Sihigiri Vitara* or Story of Sigiriya 118–119, 121). While similar to Herodotus' story on why the naval expedition set sail, the Ceylonese version links the Achaemenid navy of Darius to the island. The central question remains, however, as to whether the much-weathered and therefore poorly-preserved inscription has been accurately deciphered.⁴ Other far more clear and easily deciphered inscriptions, like one in the Brahmi script west of the Lankarama stupa from the first century BCE at Anuradhapura, indicate the presence of Sakas on the island (Bopearachchi 2006: 45).

Whether or not the Ceylonese inscription is an accurate reflection of those events, within a few centuries after Herodotus' time ancient Ceylon

³ Old or Proto and Middle or Medieval Sinhala, dating from the third to seventh and seventh through twelfth centuries respectively, comprise the classical language or *Elu* of the Sinhalese people. Both had numerous loanwords from Sanskrit and words coined to resemble Sanskrit ones. See further Gair (1996: 408).

⁴ The inscription's provenance is discussed by Paranavitana, *Sihigiri Vitara*: iii–vii. It should be noted that Weerakkody (1997: 185–195) rejects the authenticity of this and similar records relating to Sigiriya but it is unclear if he examined the inscriptions themselves. The criticisms originated in other epigraphic contexts with Gunawardana (1967) and Indrapala (1967), then spilled over to the Sigiriya-related inscriptions. Paranavitana's investigations while by no means always accurate and occasionally controversial do correlate well with the larger body of evidence for Irano-Ceylonese interactions generally and with Sigiriya specifically on which see Bopearachchi's assessment (2006: 9–10, 31–32, 56–57). Furthermore Stronach (1990: 179 note 37) accepts the validity of the inscriptions and their original sources.

certainly did become well-known across the ancient world including the Parthian and Roman Empires for exporting its precious goods. The Greco-Roman historian Strabo (lived ca. 64 BCE–23 CE) heard about the export to the Near East and Europe of “ivory, tortoise shells, and other items in large quantities via Indian markets” from the island (*Geography* 2.1:14). The Roman encyclopedist Pliny the Elder (Gaius Plinius Secundus, lived 23–79) wrote of trade in “highly valued” “pearls of great size” and “precious stones” from Taprobane to the Near East and West (*Naturalis historia* 6.24). An anonymous mid first century Greek-speaking Egyptian merchant, who appears to have travelled the sea routes mentioned: “Taprobane... produces pearls, transparent gems, cotton garments, and tortoise shell” (*Periplus Maris Erythraei* 61). The *Periplus Maris Erythraei* provides evidence that maritime trade connected not just the harbors of the Persian Gulf, the Indian coastline, and Ceylon but linked those entrepôts to ports on the Arabian Peninsula, Red Sea, and even Egypt.⁵

This textual data has found archeological corroboration as well. Glass beads manufactured in ancient Ceylon at the riverine site of Kelaniya on the west coast, in the Kala Oya river valley which was connected to the northwestern shoreline port of Pomparippu midway between Chilaw and Mannar, and at the southern town of Ridiyagama just northwest of the port of Hambantota, between the fourth century BCE and the fifth century CE can be traced as trade goods as far west as the Persian Gulf and East African coasts (Dussubieux, C. M. Kusimba, Gogte, S. B. Kusimba, and Oka 2008).

Recently in 2008, cobalt glass objects of West Asian/Near Eastern origin were identified from a shipwreck located off Ceylon’s southern coast near the town of Godawaya (Godavaya) located between Matara and Hambantota. Those objects appear to date that wreck to at least the second century (and perhaps even as far back as the second or third century BCE, although the evidence is not definite as yet), making it possibly the oldest archeologically-attested maritime vessel in the Indian Ocean. Moreover, Godawaya harbor itself has yielded a range of Mesopotamian and ancient Iranian glass, metal, and ceramic objects (Kessler 1998; Kessler, Roth, Recker, and Wijeyapala 2001; R. Muthucumarana 2010, 2011; M. Muthucumarana 2008). The nautical evidence indicates clearly, and

⁵ Texts and translations of Greek and Latin accounts on Ceylon also are collected together in Weerakkody (1997: 197–249).

supplements the textual data, that trade between Iran and Ceylon was not only along overland routes via India. So it is probable that at least some of the jewels and beads that Achaemenians and Parthians regarded as Indian were procured in Ceylon and transported over the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea back to Iran. Similarly, the West Asian/Near Eastern glass items that found pride of place in the palaces of ancient Sinhala and Tamil elites could also have carried there on ships sailing from Iranian ports on the Persian Gulf (Vogelsang 1990).

Sasanian-Era Interactions

A need for mercenaries seems have led to the next major attestation of Iranians in Ceylon, this time during the fifth century. The accounts from the fifth century that supposedly mention their presence were recopied several times until the fifteenth century as rock pillar inscriptions. Those Middle Sinhala (and corrupt Sanskrit written in the Sinhala script) records from the reign of Parākramabāhu VI (ruled 1412–1467) may or may not have had official chronicles and biographical traditions of the fifth century Sinhala Kings Dhātusena, Kāssapa (also Kāśyapa), and Moggallāna (also Mugalān) as original sources. The inscriptions were dispersed over time; fourteen have survived, now preserved at various historical sites across the island (figs. 2, 3, 4 represent three of them). In debates about the inscriptions' historicity or lack thereof it is important to note that their contents pertain to Sinhala kings, their political struggles, and their relationships to Buddhism. The Iranian represent outsiders who, as far as the Buddhist monks were concerned, brought foreign ideas, beliefs and practices that contributed to political and religious disruption in Ceylon.

King Dhātusena (ruled 455–473) gained rule over Ceylon during the fifth century with the assistance of Saka mercenaries from the Iranian provinces of Fars and Sistan, the island's records claim. Some of those Sakas had been expelled from the Sasanian Empire by the King of Kings Pērōz I for following Christianity, others for following Manichaeism (*Sihigiri Vitarā* 43). Iranian records corroborate that the reign of Peroz was a period of religious intolerance in Sasanian Iran with persecution of Manicheans, Nestorian Christians, and Monophysite Christians attested as widespread. Peroz's period is also connected, despite those persecutions, with the rise of the Nestorian or Assyrian (Syrian) Church as the preponderant form of



Fig. 2. Inscription 1, top half,
moved from Anuradhapura
to Ramakale, now on the grounds
of the Sigiriya Old Museum.



Fig. 3. Inscription 7, now at Lankatilaka
Shrine in Polonnaruwa.



Fig. 4. Inscription M51,
found at Anuradhapura,
now in the Anuradhapura Museum.

Christianity in Iran (Frye 1983: 147–149). Moreover, silver coins (Middle Persian: *drahm*) of Peroz were being copied by minters in the Sind (also Sindh) — providing more tangential evidence for the movement of Iranians southeastward in the fifth century (Senior 1996: 6). Likewise, Brahmi inscriptions (already mentioned) serve as evidence of a Saka contingent at Anuradhapura. So the documents from Ceylon do reflect one method used by Sasanian rulers for ridding their empire of non-Zoroastrians. The Lesser Chronicle of Sinhalese history or *Cūlavam̐sa* (actually the second half of the *Mahāvam̐sa* or Greater Chronicle) compiled by Buddhist monks in the Pali language (a Prakrit) during the thirteenth century does not mention Iranian soldiers, but makes clear its sources indicated that Dhatusena had assembled troops of diverse foreign origins for a series of battles to gain the throne (38.29–38) — again providing a degree of corroboration for contacts between Iranian soldiers and Ceylonese rulers.

While there are no Iranian records of Sasanian mercenary engagements in ancient Ceylon, the Iranian Muslim historian Abu Ja‘far Muḥammad ibn Jarir al-Ṭabari, writing in the early tenth century, captured an echo of their role in the island’s political struggles. Tabari preserved an apparently fictional account that the Sasanian King of Kings Khusrō I (ruled 531–579), grandson of Peroz, “sent one of his commanders with a large army to Serendib, the land of precious stones. The commander attacked the island’s king, slew him, and took control” (*Ta’rikh al-rusul wa ’l-mulūk* or History of Prophets and Kings 1.965). This Iranian tale is interesting for its, granted not complete, yet independent parallel to the presence of Iranian soldiers in fifth century Ceylon.⁶

The Iranians are said to have relocated first to Murunda territory in North India, and then recruited by Dhatusena (who founded the Moriya dynasty in medieval Ceylon) through his purported familial ties to the Yavana or Indo-Greek rulers of the Punjāb and the Puṇḍras of Puṇḍravardhana or northeastern Bengal. Among the Iranians who journeyed to the northcentral Sinhalese city of Anuradhapura is said to have been a magus (Zoroastrian priest) or *maga-brāhmaṇa*. He appears to have been there to minister to some Iranians who followed the “Persian religion” (*Pārasika-samayan* and *Pārasika-samayam*). Always mentioned only by title, and never named, that magus was alleged to have gained the

⁶ Weerakkody (1997: 136) takes the tale of a Sasanian invasion at face value but no evidence exists for such an event having occurred.



Fig. 5. Sigiriya, Main Approach through Persian Gardens, 5th century.



Fig. 6. Sigiriya, Apadana of Summit Palace.



Fig. 7. Sigiriya, Apadana of Lower Palace (with subsequent vegetation).

position of royal counselor or possibly even religious advisor (Sanskrit > Old and Middle Sinhala: *purohita*) to King Dhatuseña (*Sihigiri Vitara* 12, 18). In recent years, scholars have realized that, contrary to once assumed, knowledge about the Achaemenians did survive in Iranian oral epic and royal history (Skjærvø 1985; Daryaee 1995; Shahbazi 2001; contra Yarshater 1971). The Ceylonese story suggests that specific historical details plus broad generalities had been passed down to at least certain Iranians from Achaemenian to Sasanian times. Additionally, the *Culavamsa* notes that one of King Dhatuseña's sons, Moggallāna, had events in medieval Ceylon written down — not just of earlier periods but those of his lifetime as well (39.18). So whether or not the extant Ceylonese narratives are historically accurate in precise details, they captured descriptions about Iranian political, economic, and religious practices in addition to demonstrating that knowledge of Persian history continued to be transmitted forward through time both within and outside Iran.

What can be attested historically from Sinhala chronicles like the canonical *Culavamsa* and archeologically from the 600 foot high rock outcrop site of Sigiriya (fig. 5) is the construction of Persian-style platforms (Old Persian: *apadāna*) for palaces and audience halls atop the rock (fig. 6) and at its base (fig. 7). The *Culavamsa* recorded that subsequently Dhatuseña's son Kassapa had the "land around it [Sigiriya] cleared for gardens, enclosed with a wall, and built a staircase in the form of a lion, so it is called Sigiri or Simhagiri, the lion rock... then he built a fine palace there" (39.3–5)

(see also Obeyesekere 1990: 176). So construction of the royal palace complexes and gardens, which may have begun under Dhatusena the father, reached their climax under Kassapa the son — a coincidence with the building sequence of the royal citadel at Persepolis by Darius and his son Xerxes.

The appropriation of Sigiriya for a royal citadel, however, came at socioreligious and intercommunal costs according to other Ceylonese written sources. Donatory inscriptions carved into drip-ledges of caves and grottos used as meditation and residential chambers on the western and northern sides indicate Sigiriya had been a monastic site for Buddhist monks and other ascetics from the third and second centuries BCE (see further Bopearachchi 2006: 15; these inscriptions were first examined accurately by Paranavitana). The ousted monks went on to denounce Dhatusena and, later, his patricidal elder son as led into ignoble ways by other faiths and peoples — with the Iranians providing a perfect foil for that narrative purpose. Not surprisingly, for the clerical authors, all came to be set right again only once Buddhism was followed strictly by subsequent rulers and the rock itself reverted to a monastic setting (Bandaranayake 2004: 5; Bopearachchi 2006: 16).

The Buddhist writers could use historical events to make their religious point. A struggle of succession broke out between Dhatusena's two sons. The elder half-brother Kassapa, although not of royal descent from his maternal line, gained support from the Iranian troops and clinched victory. The *Culavamsa* recorded that Dhatusena was immured by Kassapa's Ceylonese followers with "his face turned eastward" (38.80–115).⁷ Why did Buddhists take such care to record the direction in which the walling alive of Dhatusena occurred? It is possible the monks were alluding to yet another Iranian custom — the Zoroastrian praxis of praying and also of taking last rites while facing the sun or another source of light such as a fire or star. As early as the fifth century BCE, Herodotus had commented on this Iranian custom: "They sacrifice facing the sun and moon" (*History* 1.131). The great Classical Persian poet Abu 'l-Qāsem Ferdowsi, writing in the early eleventh century, would likewise have his ancient Iranian hero Rostam "face the blesser of the world (New Persian: *jehān āfarin* or god)" in prayer tragically unaware of "fate (*bakht*) from the sun (*khoshid*) and

⁷ Geiger, *Culavamsa*: 38–41, especially 38.111 where the term *puratthābhimukhaṃ* accurately translated by Geiger is rendered incorrectly by the English translator C. Mabel Rickmers as "with his face outwards" and discussed in note 4 of the edition.

moon (*māh*)” (*Shāhnāme* or Book of Kings 6.19). The *Persian Revāyats* or Treatises composed in Yazd, at central Iran, from the fifteenth century also mention Zoroastrian last rites should be performed facing the sun (32.9–15).⁸ On the other hand, devotions directed at the sun are not important and often discouraged by the Therāvada sect of Buddhism that flourished at that time (and still predominates) in Ceylon.

Even though chronologically after the events and records under consideration, further corroboration for Iranian sun-oriented rituals having been performed in Ceylon can be found in later gravestone inscriptions which make it clear that Buddhists there knew of this Zoroastrian funerary custom. The “gravestones appear to have been erected by Sinhalese” after the death of Zoroastrians who reached the island from Iran and India, wrote a British colonial-era Parsi historian of Ceylon who documented those tombs that had survived into modern times. The graves were oriented toward the rising sun or “east on the east coast” and toward the setting sun or “west on the west coast.” Ardeshir Bāhmanshāh, who became a fisherman by occupation after reaching Ceylon, was buried in this manner at Matara on the southeast coast in 1603. The similarly-oriented burial of Dinyār Shāpur, dating from the year 1632, was found at the northwestern coastal trading town of Mannar on a peninsula across from Mantota (also known as Mantai) where he may have been a merchant “from Siraf and Diu” according to his gravestone. The voyage of another Iranian Zoroastrian, named Shāhriyār, from Hormuzd or Hormuz Island in the Persian Gulf via Sanjan on India’s northwestern coast to Tangalla on Ceylon’s southern shore where he was shipwrecked came to be documented on his gravestone in 1686. One tombstone even mentioned the grave was specifically oriented to honor the deceased’s practice of “performing devotion (Sinhala: *pūjā*) to the sun.” So the grave inscriptions and gravestone orientations reflected a prayer ritual that utilized the *Khwarshēd Yasht* and *Khwarshēd Niyāyishn* or devotional poem and invocation of praise to the sun. It was a basic ancient Zoroastrian religious practice of Iranians which came to be known to the Ceylonese through maritime contacts between the two groups (K.D. Choksy 1884–1938: 4–6; K.D. Choksy 1934).⁹

⁸ On Zoroastrian last rites see further J. K. Choksy (1989: 56; 1998).

⁹ K.D. Choksy’s findings were followed by all later scholars documenting Zoroastrians in early modern Ceylon/Sri Lanka including Rustomjee (1974: 1; 1975: 1, 3), Billimoria (1999: 73–74, 76), and J.K. Choksy (2004: 51; 2007: 187).



Fig. 8. Sigiriya, View of Ground-Level Persian Gardens from Summit Palace Complex.



Fig. 9. Sigiriya, Persian Gardens on Summit.

Perhaps it was the magus who, per instructions from the new King Kassapa I (ruled 473–491), laid out gardens to create an Iranian-style walled paradise (Old Persian: *paradayadā*) of water, terrace, and boulder gardens on 395 acres of the plain around Sigiriya rock (figs. 5, 8) plus smaller gardens upon the summit (fig. 9). Especially striking at Sigiriya is the four-segmented or quartered garden style (figs. 5, 8) based on the Iranian *chahār bāgh* or quadrilateral pattern in which a garden is divided by walkways and watercourses into four smaller parts. The Iranian pattern began in the seventh through fifth centuries BCE, drawing upon earlier Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian designs (Stronach 1978: 107–112; Stronach 1990; and Stronach 1994 discussed the Achaemenid Persian contribution). Yet, in addition to the Achaemenid period royal gardens at Pasargadae (Parsagada) and Persepolis (Takht-e Jamshid), the Median *chahār bāgh* in the citadel at Hamadan in northwestern Iran provides a perfect and earlier model dating to the eighth through sixth centuries BCE (fig. 10). A later more contemporaneous example, which could have been known to the builders of Sigiriya, was the Sasanian-era garden and pools at Taq-e Bostan in Fars province of Iran (fig. 11) (Fukai and Horiuchi 1969). It should be noted that the Iranian provenance of the gardens at Sigiriya (fig. 12) has been suggested by a range of scholars from both the East and the West (Obeyesekere 1990: 127–128; Bopearachchi 2002: 111–112; Bandaranayake 2004: 15–20; Brown 2005; Bopearachchi 2006: 17–51).

Indeed Sigiriya is possibly the earliest example of Persian gardens outside Iran. As in ancient Iran, the gardens at the base and on the summit of Sigiriya are not only fully integrated with other architectural features, but are the central focus of the layout with the remains of Iranian-style *hasht behesht* or eight paradise (eight quartered) gardens plus central pavilions also still found there (see also Fakour 2000). Moreover, the various hunting grounds within the larger perimeter of Sigiriya are reminiscent of the poorly-preserved ones around the Sasanian royal hunting lodge at Sarvestan from the early fifth century when Wahrām V, grandfather of Peroz, ruled Iran (Bier 1986). It is hard to deny the distinct possibility that an Iranian supervised the layout of Sigiriya, like the local records suggest, to ensure prestige, pomp, and extravagance deemed worthy of the Sinhalese ruler (Paranavitana 1950: 129, 132; Bopearachchi 2006: 17–57; compare Stronach 1990: 179 note 37).



Fig. 10. Hamadan, Median Garden in Citadel, ca. 8th to 6th centuries BCE.



Fig. 11. Taq-e Bostan, Sasanian Pool and Gardens, ca. 4th to 7th centuries.



Fig. 12. Sigiriya Rock, Citadel and Gardens, Aerial Panorama (courtesy of Google Earth).

Atop the summit, just below the palace and separated from nearby small man-made ponds (fig. 13), pools surrounded by terraced gardens (fig. 14), and miniature gardens (fig. 9), was the Sinhala king's stone-hewn throne (fig. 15) modeled much like Iranian monarchs' couches. Again, an account outside the chronological scope of the events just discussed does provide suggestive corroboration. John Pybus, the first representative from the British East India Company to the Kandyan kingdom of Ceylon in the year 1762, described the monarch Kirti Sri Rājasimha's (Rājasingha, ruled 1747–1782) — who was of mixed Sinhalese and Tamil descent — as enthroned “in a fifty foot long and thirty foot wide audience hall, screened by a series of white and reddish-purple curtains, and only once the last curtain was drawn-up was the king revealed, seated on a throne upon a large Persian carpet” (*Mission to the King of Kandy* 90–91). This early colonial period image from Ceylon also evokes the royal curtains which screened Iranian kings as mentioned in the biblical *Book of Esther* (1.6) and Ferdowsi's *Shāhnāme* (11.3). So in the fifth century, it is likely that Kassapa reclined upon his cushioned stone throne couch (fig. 15) upon the *apadana* at Sigiriya's summit under a timber roof with curtains to shield him from other palace denizens unless he had those drawn back to grant an audience or to enjoy the view.



Fig. 13. Sigiriya, Small Pond in Persian Gardens on Summit.



Fig. 14. Sigiriya, Pool in Persian Gardens on Summit.



Fig. 15. Sigiriya, Throne Couch on Summit.

Royally-dispensed torture among medieval Sinhala kings, as recorded in the medieval Ceylonese texts, also mimicked Iranian ones recounted by Darius I in his *Old Persian Inscription* (2.73–74) at Behistun, “I cut off his nose, ears, and tongue, and blinded one eye” and by Herodotus in his tale about Amestris, queen of Xerxes, taking revenge against the mother of a rival for the king’s favor by cutting off the woman’s “nose, ears, and lips” (*History* 9.112).¹⁰ Upon gaining the throne of medieval Ceylon, Moggallana proceeded to “cut off the nose and ears” of those who had sided with Kassapa according to the *Culavamsa* (39.35–36). It should be remembered, however, that such punishment was present elsewhere in the ancient Near East as well — for Herodotus mentioned its practice by Egyptians in the sixth century BCE (*History* 2.162, 3.154). But there is limited indication of direct contact between the Egyptians and Ceylonese in ancient and medieval times — the author of the *Periplus Maris Erythraei* being a notable exception — whereas, as discussed in this article, ample evidence of interaction between Iranians and Ceylonese survives from those periods.

¹⁰ On the Iranian practices see further Lincoln (2007: 85–86).

The extant information is episodic, but Iranians' contacts with Ceylon, then also called Sielediba and Seledibal, and its people may have been constant during Sasanian times (Weerakkody 1997). The Greek merchant Cosmas Indicopleustes of Alexandria, writing ca. 550 about his travels, commented that the island "is visited by ships from all regions of India and Persia, and sends out many of its own ships" (11.365–368). Items mentioned by Cosmas as traded via Ceylon to Iran included Chinese silk and porcelain, while indigenous items exported from Ceylon included cloves, pepper, sandalwood, and copper (11.366). He noted too an episode when a local Ceylonese ruler preferring the gold coinage or *aurei* of Romans over the silver currency or *drahms* of Sasanians as payment for the island's exports (11.368–370). Subsequently the Byzantine writer Theophylactus Simocattes (Theophylact Simocatta) (lived ca. late 580s–640) observed that gemstones and pearls acquired from Ceylon were embroidered into Sasanian ceremonial garments (*History* 5.1.8). The trade was by no means unidirectional however for Cosmas wrote that "horses are brought from Persia to the [Sinhalese] king and he buys them, exempting the importers from customs duties" (11.372). A geographical account attributed to Movsēs Khorenats'i (dating to sometime between the fifth and ninth centuries), which drew upon the writings of Pappus of Alexandria (lived fourth century), suggests that knowledge both factual and fabulous of Ceylon had reached Armenia, again probably through Iranian and Egyptian travelers. "Imperishable woods, ginger, fine pearls and the most precious stones" (*Geography* 1.36) plus "gold, silver, aromatics, and elephants" (*Geography* 2.36), were mentioned in the Armenian record (and the Egyptian one) again, indicating those items formed a large portion of the stock trade from the island to Iran and countries further west.

Numismatic evidence from Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages supports the literary record through the fairly extensive presence of Sasanian silver coins as trade currency on the island (Bopearachchi 1993; Bopearachchi 1997: xx). Additionally late Sasanian and early Islamic glazed ceramics, clay bullae, and stamp seals from Iran, including a fifth to seventh century sealing bearing a magus' Middle Persian epigraph, a Nestorian cross, and a Bactrian camel have been recovered at Mantota (Mantai). Mantota used to function as a major international maritime entrepôt on Ceylon's northwest coast from whence foreigners travelled to Anuradhapura and other royal centers (Carswell 1990; Carswell 1991;

Carswell and Prickett 1984; Charvát 1993; Prickett 1990; Prickett forthcoming a; Prickett forthcoming b; Frye 1993). Sasanian blue glazed ware has also been identified in excavations at Anuradhapura (Bopearachchi 2006: 46).

Unlike the careful excavations at Mantota and Anuradhapura, however, it is ocean waves that cast ashore hundreds of Iranian ceramics from medieval ships wrecked off Galle between the fifth and ninth centuries (fig. 16) that fill not only the maritime museum there but nearby antiquity stores. Sasanian *drahms* have documented along Ceylon's southern coastline too (Bopearachchi 2006: 47 with full references). The archeological finds suggest sea routes from the Persian Gulf across the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean appear to have been under Iranian control — a veritable Sasanian pond — whereas the land routes fell under the dominion of various localized rulers and therefore were less secure and less profitable (see also Potts 2010; Daryaee 2003). As a result, Roman and Byzantine merchants increasingly seem to have utilized Iranian middlemen when procuring goods from Ceylon between the fourth and seventh centuries (Bopearachchi 1997: xix–xx).

Assyrian Christians ensured yet another Sasanian period Iranian connection to Ceylon. Cosmas Indicopleustes discussed a Nestorian Christian community of Iranian traders and missionaries residing in Taprobane during the sixth century: “The Island also has a church for Persian Christians,



Fig. 16. Iranian Shipwreck Pottery, now in the Galle Museum.

who have settled there, with a presbyter [or bishop], deacon, and a complete ecclesiastical ritual” (11.365). A range of Ceylonese textual records including the *Culavamsa* are clear that many of the Sinhalese and Tamil commanders serving King Moggallana, who ended Kassapa’s reign and with it the royal presence at Sigiriya, in the late fifth century were St. Thomas Christians who derived their faith from Nestorians — much to the chagrin of Buddhist monks. They had been converted directly by missionaries or indirectly by women in their families, some in Ceylon and others while in exile in South India before returning to overthrow Kassapa. Archeology provides corroboration in the form of a contemporaneous cross carved on a stone block at Anuradhapura (fig. 17) (see also Hocart 1912–1913: 5). Unlike six South Indian counterparts (Anklesaria 1958), all which date from the fifth century onward, the Anuradhapura cross bears no Middle Persian and/or Syriac inscriptions — which may indicate it originated among a more local community of converts, like the commanders to King Moggallana, who did not know Near Eastern languages (contra Weerakkody 1997: 135–136).¹¹ However it is also possible that like the Indian ones, the cross in Ceylon represents devotional artwork of Iranian followers of Syrian Christianity who fled eastward once persecution of Christians began — much like the Zoroastrians who would relocate to the Indian subcontinent a few centuries later after Arab Muslims took control of Iran. If an account by a Portuguese colonial period Chronicler, Friar Fernao de Queyroz (1617–1688) is accurate, at least two other ancient carvings of Nestorian crosses existed in Ceylon including one on a small stone column in the Church of St. Thomas at Gintupitiya which is now a suburb of Colombo and would then have been a maritime town (Perera 1992: 715). The original sixth century church was transformed into a Catholic one by the Portuguese during the seventeenth century and eventually into an Anglican one by the British in 1815.

¹¹ This Nestorian cross was found during excavations within the citadel of Anuradhapura in 1912 by Muhandiram P.D.A. Wickremasuriya, then the chief draughtsman for the Ceylon Archeology Department, and is now housed at the Anuradhapura Museum. This cross is mentioned very briefly by Bopearachchi (2002: 110) as well. It resembles a cross discovered by the Portuguese in 1547 on the Mount of St. Thomas in Mylapore, Tamil Nadu (South India).



Fig. 17. Nestorian Cross, ca. 5th century,
found at Anuradhapura,
now in the Anuradhapura Museum.

Early Muslim Iranians and Ceylon

Even religio-political change in Iran did not end connections to Ceylon, for trade during the ‘Abbasid Caliphate (750–1258) brought Sunnis and Shi‘ites to Ceylon’s shores (Whitehouse and Williamson 1973). Islamic mercantile communities of Iranian extraction can be documented along Ceylon’s coastline from the 700s onward. Those merchants carried home information about the island that medieval Iranian geographers utilized (compare Assad 1993: 3–4). Likewise, burials indicate the presence of Iranian Muslim merchants in the port cities of Mannar, Chilaw, Hendalla, Galle, Tangalla, and Batticaloa between the eighth and twelfth centuries — with headstone inscriptions suggesting they served as intermediaries for goods flowing between Iran and China (K.D. Choksy 1884–1938: 7).¹² So the confessional allegiance of many Iranians traversing those routes had begun to gradually switch from Zoroastrianism, Manicheism, and Nestorianism to Islam between the seventh and thirteenth centuries. The port of Mantai proved to be one locale where Iranian Muslim merchants replaced Zoroastrians within a trading diaspora from whence goods including pearls, garnets, rubies, and spices were exported to Iran as demonstrated by the material finds of excavations there (Carswell 1977–1978; Prickett-Fernando 1990a; Prickett-Fernando 1990b). The Berber Sunni traveler Abū Abdullāh Muḥammad ibn Battūta, after visiting medieval Ceylon in 1344, commented that a local Tamil ruler at the port city of Puttalam on the northwest coast spoke with him in Persian or Farsi during meetings spread over three days. While in Ceylon, Ibn Battuta spent time with at least two Iranians — a merchant originally from Khorasan who had relocated to Puttalam, and a missionary from Shiraz named Othmān who had built a *masjed* or mosque near the city of Kurunegala in the southcentral part of the island (*Travels* 242–243).

In addition to the importance of its own trade goods, another constant lure of Ceylon for Iranians was its geographical intermediacy along the shipping lanes to and from China. Perhaps the best measure of how important and influential Iranians were in ancient and medieval Ceylon comes from an early fifteenth century trilingual inscription in Chinese, Tamil, and

¹² Some of the tombstones are now housed in the National Museum at Colombo; others are at regional museums of the specific cities.

Persian, discovered by the British at the southern port of Galle in 1911 where it had been re-used to cover a culvert or public drain.

In February 1409, the Ming eunuch admiral Zheng He (Cheng Ho), a Muslim by confession, set sail from Nanjing on his third Asiatic voyage. On board his ship was the trilingual inscription (fig. 18a) which had been inscribed prior to his departure. His armada entered Galle harbor in the year 1411, and the tablet was erected there. The three inscriptions are not identical but complementary. The Chinese text fills the right side; a Tamil text takes up the top left. The bottom left of the tablet bears a Persian or Farsi inscription (fig. 18b) where the “light of Islam” (Persian: *nur-e*



Fig. 18a. Galle Trilingual Inscription in Chinese, Tamil and Persian, 1409, now in the Colombo National Museum.

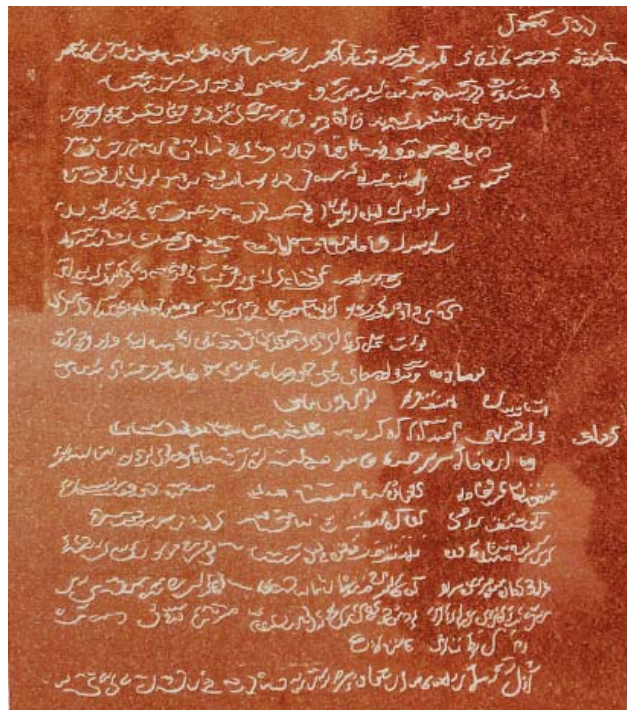


Fig. 18b. Galle Trilingual Inscription, Persian Text (courtesy of Colombo Museum).

Eslām) is mentioned together with a list of gifts sent by the Ming emperor Zhū Di (also known as Yongle) (Paranavitana 1933).¹³ The choice of Persian for one version of the text reveals that the Chinese associated Ceylon with an important Persian-speaking mercantile community. Indeed, genealogies indicate Iranian Muslim traders residing in the port towns of medieval Ceylon often married into the families of local Moor Muslims despite the distinction of being Shi'ites and Sunnis respectively. Their descendants built mosques in coastal cities like Matara, and several contemporary *masjeds* stand upon those medieval foundations.

Concluding Observations

The Franciscan friar Giovanni dei Marignolli visited Ceylon by ship in the year 1348 or 1349. He complained about being detained and fleeced by a non-native Muslim leader at the port of Beruwala along the island's southwestern shore. He also wrote that "from Seylan to Paradise (so drawing upon the Persian term *pardis*), according to what the natives say after a tradition from their forefathers, is a distance of 40 leagues [or Roman miles]; so, it is said, the sound of the fountains of Paradise may be heard there" (*Chronicon Bohemiæ* 44–45). Local tradition claims Marignolli heard the tale from a Persian merchant-prince at Beruwala, perhaps the same Muslim who also swindled him. As had many travelers before him, Giovanni too would sail from Ceylon to Hormuz Island in the Persian Gulf and then journey overland to Isfahan, before making his way back to Naples, Florence, and Avignon. The history of interactions between Iranian and Ceylonese peoples, cultures, politics, religions, and economies runs long and, as the evidence examined in this article suggests, deep. The records of those early interactions serve well in complementing and supplementing the historiography of Iran by filling lacuna, corroborating data, and adding new information.¹⁴

¹³ It is curious why neither the Chinese royal administration nor the admiral employed a scribe fluent in Persian, for orientation and connection of the Persian letters plus grammatical errors demonstrate the engraver has only a limited knowledge of that Iranian language. The inscribed slab had eventually been utilized as a culvert cover along a road in Galle where it was found by a British provincial engineer, Mr. H.F. Tomalin, in 1911.

¹⁴ This article originated as the 5th Richard N. Frye Fund Lecture at Harvard University in March 2011. I am grateful for that opportunity to honor my former graduate teacher and doyen of Iranian studies.

(All photographs taken by the author during fieldwork in Sri Lanka from 2008 to 2010 and fieldwork in Iran in 2003 unless otherwise noted)

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